South African Poetry & Verse

E. H. Crouch

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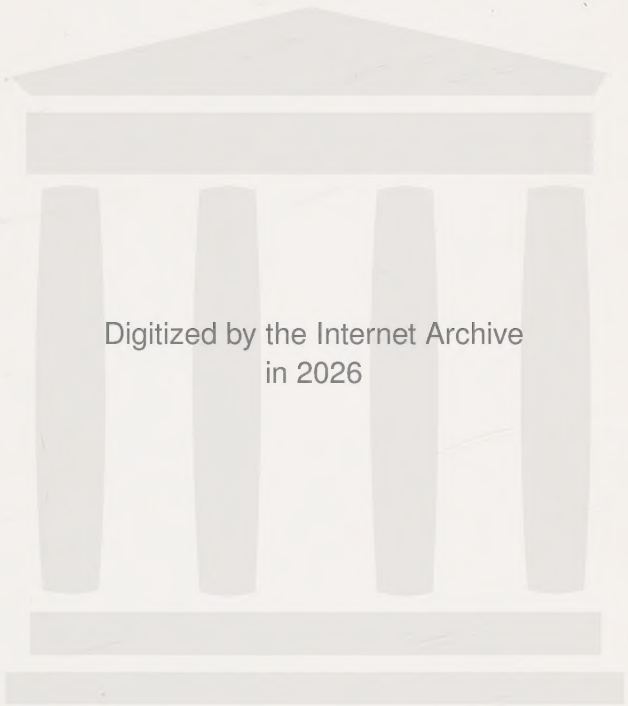
A TREASURY OF
SOUTH AFRICAN
POETRY AND VERSE.

With much love from
us all.

Florence W. Dalgleish

January 22nd 1910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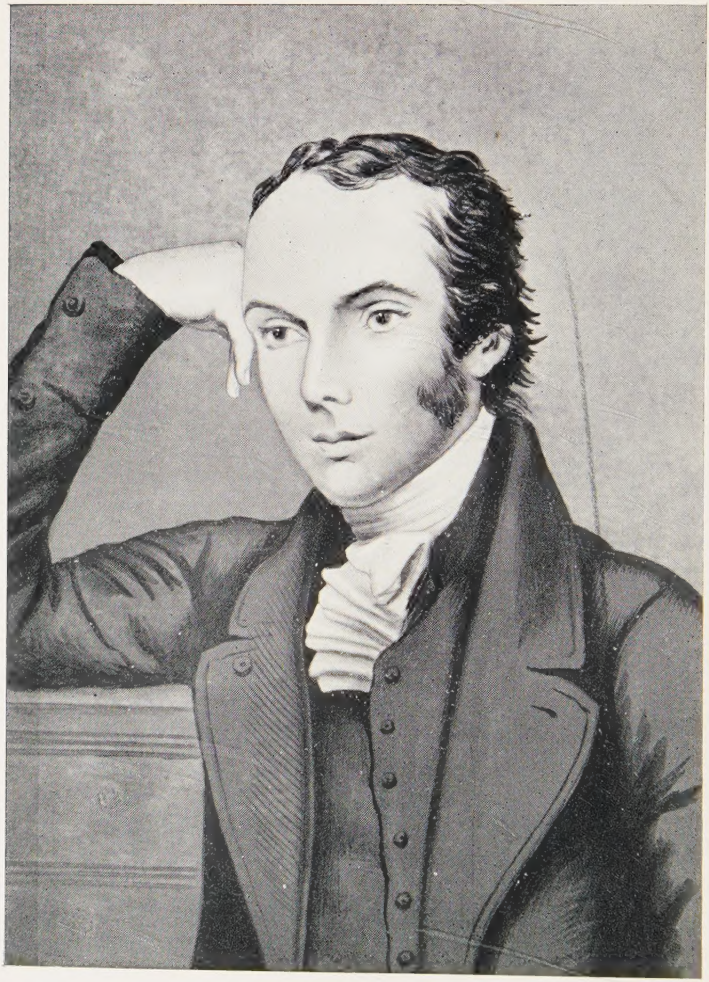

THOMAS PRINGLE

(BORN 1788; DIED 1834),

THE FATHER OF SOUTH AFRICAN POETRY.

A TREASURY OF
South African Poetry and Verse

COLLECTED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES AND ARRANGED BY

EDWARD HEATH CROUCH,
CAMBRIDGE, SOUTH AFRICA.

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1907.

TO MY WIFE,

WHOSE INTEREST, ENCOURAGEMENT, AND NICE CRITICAL
FACULTY HAVE HELPED ME NOT A LITTLE IN
COMPILING THIS SELECTION OF
SOUTH AFRICAN POEMS.

La Croix,
Cambridge,
Cape Colony,
1907.

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INTRODUCTION.

To make a selection of the best and most familiar poetry any country has produced is, I conceive, a desirable as well as pleasing object; and to make a selection of the verse—in many cases very scattered—of a young country, which has hitherto produced no really great poet, and whose poetry in many cases has not extended beyond mediocrity, is, I think, not only desirable but essential. The present volume is therefore an attempt to collect and arrange such. The object has been to make a selection from a selection; in short, to give, as far as material would allow, true and faithful specimens of the best which our poetical writers have hitherto given us. Such a selection—which, I trust, will merit the name of a "Treasury"—does, I hope, no injustice to the authors who have already published their poems in book form; on the contrary, I hope that it may tend to popularize their works still more, by directing more attention to them, and thereby stimulating a desire to possess complete editions. It also fulfils the useful purpose of saving perhaps from oblivion some gem or worthy song which would otherwise lie forgotten in dry-as-dust pages of old Cape magazines or journals.

It is hoped that a selection like this will have the desirable effect of stimulating and fostering the too latent taste in the young colonial mind for the best in poetry which his country has hitherto produced, or may ultimately produce.

Certain it is that no country should oftener pause in its ardent materialistic pursuits to find in poetry that relief and support in its strenuous life, than South Africa. We cannot be too often reminded of Matthew Arnold's assurance, that "more and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us." That is a duty we owe to ourselves. True, South African poetry at present may not be able to satisfy this demand in its entirety. "The breath and finer spirit" are often wanting, but "the light that never was on land or sea"—the poet's dream—has been felt, and is striving for utterance. Whether the voice will be a lasting one depends largely upon the demand made by the people. They have, consciously or unconsciously, the destiny of the poetry of the future in their hands. Given sympathy, and a high standard demanded, the poet's lyre will respond; ignored, stifled—the result will be silence, possibly death, and the loss South African.

Then again, it is felt that there is a large and growing field of readers across the water who, interested probably by ties of kinship, would welcome a volume of verse resonant of the voices and sentiments of those living under Southern skies. To them, such a selection

as the present one may prove both interesting and valuable. It would be interesting by reason of reflecting what I might term the *local colour*, with all its brilliancy and uniqueness—those specially distinctive features of South African scenery, as shown in its grand and rugged mountains, boundless karoo, and rolling veldt; it would be valuable by reason of rescuing its native folk-lore and legend from oblivion, and weaving around them the glamour of song, as has been done in Australia by Adam Lindsay Gordon and Kendall, and in America by Longfellow and Bryant.

In compiling the present volume from a very scattered field of fugitive and other poetry—in some cases going back to the days of the British settlers—the length of the poem has been one of the determining factors, and some poems have thus regretfully had to be omitted. War poems, martial lays, and to a certain extent religious poems have also been largely excluded; the former entirely so, on account of their diction or rougher form setting ill amongst the necessarily more musical lyric, or even sonnet. The latter class, however, possessing all the essential qualifications of devotional verse, has been relegated to a place at the end of the volume.

Lest the word "Treasury" should to some appear suggestive of claiming a position for the volume analogous to that of Palgrave's incomparable and unique selection, let me say at once such an idea surely could never be seriously entertained. To the

literature glorifying a thousand years, "the idle singers of an empty day" here would be the first to do homage. Still, it is hoped and believed that in the fairer and more just comparison with the productions of such sister colonies as New Zealand, Australia, and even Canada, it will be found that relatively South Africa compares not unfavourably, despite the fact—a very vital one, too—that these colonies have (with the one exception) been favoured in possessing from their earliest history more uniformity of language, greater sympathy between the various sections of its peoples, and above all, fortunate in the experience of a calmer flow in their historic annals, which has rendered possible—nay, even fostered that mental and social condition, that finer spirit of harmony and feeling from which the loftiest song is always born.

E. H. CROUCH.

July 1907.

NOTE.

My hearty thanks are due to the authors whose full names appear in the Contents, for permission so readily and courteously granted to include some of their poems in this collection. Also to that pioneer in Cape anthology, the Hon. A. Wilmot, M.L.A.; to Messrs. Juta & Co., T. Maskew Miller, Thompson & Co., Macmillan & Co., T. Fisher Unwin, William Blackwood & Sons, Elliot Stock, Longmans, Green & Co., and Sampson Low, Marston & Co., for permission to make use of scattered verse which has either appeared in periodicals or books published by them. There are others whose address is untraceable, by reason of their attaching their initials or a *nom de plume* to their compositions; to all such I trust this acknowledgment of indebtedness will suffice.

E. H. C.

". . . O Africa! long lost in night,
Upon the horizon gleams the light
Of breaking dawn. . . .
Thy name has been slave of the world,
But when thy banner is unfurl'd,
Triumphant Liberty shall wave
Its standard o'er foul slavery's grave;
And earth—decaying earth—shall see
Her freest, fairest child in thee."—*Thomson.*

A Treasury of South African Poetry and Verse.

THE VOORLOOPERS.

They hasten to their heritage,
The guerdon of their days,
To labour long and wearily
For scanty gold or praise;
To toil unseen and overmuch,
And if their meed be fame,
To carve themselves an epitaph
To mark their place and name.

They hasten to their heritage,
The right to bridge and build,
To serve among the journeymen,
To suffer with the guild;
To plan the work, and found it fair,
And, ere 'tis gable high,
To pass the trowel to the next,
And turn aside to die.

They hasten to their heritage,
The tender and the tried;
Each tide beholds them outward bound,
God wot, the field is wide.

They bring the best of heart and hand,
  Of blood, and breed, and birth;
Their graves upon our frontiers lie,
  To testify their worth.

They hasten to their heritage,
  The feeble and the fain;
They bring the best of youth and hope,
  To garner age and pain,
To glean the dole of little thanks,
  To suffer and be dumb;
To die when duty names the man—
  And still their cohorts come.

Perceval Gibbon.

MIMOSA.

The bloom of the mimosa
  Between your lips and me,
Withholds you like a lattice
  Of golden filigree.

The thorns of the mimosa,
  Between your breast and me,
Are like the blades of vengeance
  That guard the Eden tree.

The breach in the mimosa,
  That gives your lips to me,
Is like the breath of blessing
  That sets the spirit free.

The scent of the mimosa,
  That rains on you and me,
Is like a dear remembrance
  Of bliss that used to be.

Perceval Gibbon.

THE VELDT.

Cast the window wider, sonny,
Let me see the veldt,
Rolling grandly to the sunset,
Where the mountains melt,
With the sharp horizon round it,
Like a silver belt.

Years and years I've trekked across it,
Ridden back and fore,
Till the silence and the glamour
Ruled me to the core;
No man ever knew it better,
None could love it more.

There's a balm for crippled spirits
In the open view,
Running from your very footsteps
Out into the blue;
Like a wagon-track to heaven,
Straight 'twixt God and you.

There's a magic, soul-compelling,
In the boundless space,
And it grows upon you, sonny,
Like a woman's face—
Passionate and pale and tender,
With a marble grace.

There's the sum of all religion
In its mightiness;
Winged truths, beyond your doubting,
Close about you press.
God is greater in the open—
Little man is less.

There's a voice pervades its stillness,
Wonderful and clear;
Tongues of prophets and of angels,
Whispering far and near,
Speak an everlasting gospel
To the spirit's ear.

There's a sense you gather, sonny,
In the open air;
Shift your burden ere it break you:
God will take His share.
Keep your end up for your own sake;
All the rest's His care.

There's a promise, if you need it,
For the time to come;
All the veldt is loud and vocal
Where the Bible's dumb.
Heaven is paved with gold for parsons,
But it's grassed for some.

There's a spot I know of, sonny,
Yonder by the stream;
Bushes handy for the fire,
Water for the team.
By the old home outspan, sonny,
Let me lie and dream.

Perceval Gibbon.

VOICES OF THE VELDT.

Land! I will show you land; mile upon mile
Of ridge and kopje, bush and candid waste,
Sun-drowned and empty, tacit as the sea,
Belted about with the horizon line,
And over all the blank and curving sky.
Is it not still? And with the sacred calm
Of cool church shadows, where one speaks and moves
As though God spied upon one; and all things—
Trespassing sunbeams, spiders, swarming motes,
The profile of a woman at her prayers,
The tang that rules the sermon, one's own thoughts—
Go bowed below a dread significance.
You know the feeling; but the veldt, my veldt,
Is more than any church, more vastly still
Than grey cathedrals drowsing down the years,
More fraught with solemn meanings and dim dreams,
Than any storied hive of shaveling saints.
Still, did I say? Well, still it surely is,
And yet it hath a voice, its mood of sound,
As prophets, meanly meditating, start
From torpor into fired utterance.
On its occasion it will speak in tones
That thundered first of all on Sinai.
The voice of all the world and all the sky
Poured through the tempest-trumpet, and, between
The drum of sullen strength and passion's shrill,
Riding above the thunder and the wind,
There comes at last the still small voice of God.

And it will speak sometimes, far off and clear,
Aloof, unflushed, ungilded, calm, superb,
The voice of angels at the judgment-seat,
Impartial, cold exponents of the law.
And then it chants! O morning stars in song,
O hills in choir triumphant, ringing earth,
And dome of shuddering echoes, hush and hear!
It has the anthem laid upon its lips
Which all creation sang at the seventh dawn,
And God heard, smiling, saying: "It is good."
And in wild breezes, ere the timid spring
Quite flings her draperies apart, and dares
Her naked foot of blessing on the turf,
Her naked breast of promise on the air,
It pipes, like that goat-footed god of Greece
Beside his stream, pillowed on life itself,
And sometimes like the potent piper, who
Charmed hell to hush its dreary agony.

Perceval Gibbon.

KOMANI.

Runs Komani ever?
Weep the willows still?
Gleam the grass-fires nightly
Wreathed upon the hill?
Comes the summer singing?
Tiptoes yet the spring?
Tell me of Komani—
Tell me everything.

For yonder by Komani
I left my lady fair,
Who smiled for ever under
Her aureole of hair—
Smiled and would not hearken,
Heard and would not smile.
I turned me from Komani
A long and weary while.

Often by Komani
I heard my lady's name
Amid the tinkling ripples,
And is it still the same?
Or goes Komani voiceless
Where music used to be,
Forgetful of my lady,
As once she was of me.

Perceval Gibbon.

JIM.

(AN INCIDENT.)

FROM the Kei to Umzimkulu
We chartered to ride,
But before we reached Umtata
Jim turned in and died.
By Bashee I buried Jim.
Ah! but I was fond of him;
An' but for the niggers grinning,
I'd—yes, I'd have cried.

'Twas a weary trek through Griqualand,
And me all alone;
Three teams and a dozen niggers
To boss on my own.
And I felt a need for Jim;
It was just the job for him,
Hazin' the teams and the niggers,
Hard grit to the bone.

I lost a load at Kokstad:
An axle fell through;
I hadn't heart to tinker it,
So pushed on with two.
If I'd only had old Jim!
Axles never broke with him;
But I never could handle waggons
Like Jim used to do.

I came to Umzimkulu
  With a pain in my head;
I ought to ha' bought med'cine,
  But I liquored instead:
Never used to drink with Jim;
There's a girl that asked for him;
But the jackals root at Bashee—
  An' Jim, he's dead!

Perceval Gibbon.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

Hearken! 'tis the Nightingale
O'er the silence doth prevail,
Ravishing the listening air
With his solo rich and clear,
With his exquisite delight
Thrilling all the heart of night.
Surely naught akin to pain
Is the theme of such a strain:
Only love's divinest treasure,
Only love's unshadowed pleasure
Can give birth to such a measure;
Love, without its care and pain,
Such as others seek in vain,
Surely is this creature's gain!
Love we dream of, pining, yearning,
To be lost within its burning!

The mysterious music falls
Now at wayward intervals:
Now a rivulet of song,
As from springs of Helicon,
Through the darkness bubbles on—
Bubbles through the breathless air
In notes so full, so rich, so clear,
Angels lean from heaven to hear,
Lean until their listening faces
Light the interstellar spaces,

As they whisper their surmise:
"'Tis a sister in disguise,
Singing for the world's delight,
The cantata she, by right,
Should have sung in Heaven to-night."

Now the witching rhythm flows
Softly to a perfect close,
In severed notes that drowse and swoon,
If for ever, ah, too soon!
And we sigh the song should be
So fugitive, when suddenly
A swift, aerial round
Of voluptuous, throbbing sound
Flows again in wild delight
Through the enamoured hush of night,
On and on, as if to drain
His heart of music in one strain
The bird, if bird it be, were fain.
'Tis a bird, and nothing more,
With one song, his only store,
And he repeats it o'er and o'er
To be more perfect than before.
But that bird in heavenly spheres,
Singing to angelic ears,
That did never suffer wound
From a false discordant sound,
For his singing would be crowned.

A pause—and now the vale is full
Of intermittent, musical
Trills of rapture, beautiful!
Rippling in the dreamy sky,
How they flow, and ebb, and die!

How they revel, toy and tarry,
Falter with the bliss they carry!
Tremble, with excess of gladness,
On the narrow brink of sadness!
Till the serenade appears
But to bubble up through tears;
And the music's tender stress
Yields again to silentness:
And the artful bird capricious,
In a reverie delicious,
Mute upon the star-lit spray,
Meditates his winsome lay:
Or, perchance, 'twere sooth to say,
He pauses to rejoice,
And marvel at his matchless voice,
And so awhile forgets to sing
For his own music listening:
And hence the hush, while leaf and wing,
Shadow, starlight, everything,
In this mystical recess
Amid the hills is motionless,
Lest the timid creature hear,
Rise and vanish into air;
Nor thereafter dare nor deign,
Here to fold his wings again.

Ah, their vigil is not vain!
Hark! the music falls like rain,
When in heaven's bright abyss,
One lone cloud and no wind is.
So waywardly, so tenderly,
Note by note the melody
On th' absorbing silence falls

At divinest intervals,
Wherein bird and music seem
The creation of some dream.
Oh, but hearken! clear and strong
Again the swift notes throb and throng,
Rejoicing in a rush of song,
Sweet and passionate above
All that words can tell of love,
Flowing on and on, as tho'
It would never cease to flow,
For the singer, in his gladness,
Sings himself to very madness,
And, to share his heart's delight
With all around, would flood the night
With music, as the perfect moon
Floods it with her stintless boon
Of splendour, when she hovers bright,
Pure and naked in the height
Of heaven's dome of crystallite.
But not the minstrel's utmost art
Can fully to the world impart
The song he sings within his heart;
And here, here too, the real
Reaches not its dream-ideal;
And the bird, so long o'erwrought
By incommunicable thought,
Yearns, until his voice is fraught
With sobs and tears and notes that wane,
And the wild impassioned strain
Dies away, nor wakes again.

W. E. Hunter.

WRITTEN ON RECOVERY FROM SICKNESS, 1906.

How dreamlike, strange, is this
Reprieve to happiness
And life! to sit at ease
In comfort of green trees!
And marvelling hear
Thrush and blackbird piping near;
Whilst, thro' every passive sense,
Creeps a healing influence,
That, baptizing heart and brain,
Renews and makes me whole again!

No more, like one for whom
There is nor light nor gloom,
Silence nor sound,
His sleep is so profound,
I lie, in seeming rest,
With hands prayer-folded on my breast,
Silent, as slow nights and days
Pass on undistinguished ways,
Silent, tho' my heart made moan,
Sadly to herself alone,
Saying, "Now, dissolves the snow;"
Saying, "Now, the violets blow;—
Ah, when I am laid more low,
They will blow more close to me,
Closer still and I not see,

Not know."—
But lo!
I wile away
Once again a summer's day,
In this pleasant sylvan place,
Where the alders interlace
Their boughs above me, and the blue
Bells and flowers of purple hue
Make beautiful the lone recess
With glamour of their loveliness.

—Nature for herself against
All the world this valley fenced.
For her own delight she wrought
In sculpture her poetic thought:
Then she breathed upon it, till
It breathed to her again, and rill
And herb and flower returned the smile
Of love, that lit her face the while.
How beautiful it is! How meet,
For the solace of retreat!
Guardian hills have charge to keep
Watch around it, steep on steep,
Save, to westward, where a space
Opens in their green embrace,
And, behind, the ocean paves
The chasm with protecting waves.

Thro' the tranquil, sylvan valley
Toys a streamlet musically;
All too happy to haste on,
Such sweet themes it dwells upon,

With a low and inward voice
To itself it doth rejoice;
And the little sedge-birds sit
In the reeds and hark to it;
And from banks of mossy green,
Flowers that love it droop and lean,
As it lingers, winds, and wanders
Under willow trees and alders—
As it lingers, winds and flows
'Neath the lilies' driven snows,
And a yellow dragon-fly
Crosses it incessantly.
—Ever may the streamlet be
Clear as snow, untainted, free!
And the vale,—may no men win it
From the blackbird and the linnet,
And the thrush that harbour in it!

Now the song-birds throng the bushes,
And the water-birds the rushes;
And thro' golden haze, the bee
Darting, seeks her treasury
With what nectar she could win
From the tired flowers folding in;
And the landscape all alight
With rose and amber, depth and height,
Burns beneath the fiery sky;
And the radiant waters vie
With heaven's splendour, where the sun,
Now his western goal is won,
Stands upon the molten wave,
Magician-like, as if he gave

A farewell blessing to the earth,
And foretold to-morrow's birth,
Ere lowlier, on the ocean's breast,
He bows in worship, and to rest
Sinks beyond our vision's quest.
—How calm it is! Earth, sea and air,
Hush with him in silent prayer!
So awhile,—then clear and strong
A sweet gush of vesper song!
All the heart of music throbbing
In a bird's ecstatic sobbing,
As the purple shadows close
Over amber, over rose,
And a chime from far away
Rings the passing of the day.

—As a lover, tired of roaming,
Who returneth in the gloaming;
Who returneth home at last,
After months and perils past,
As with gentle hand he presses
Back the loved one's silken tresses,
Gazes earnestly a space,
On her dear familiar face,
Reads it fondly o'er and o'er,
And finds it fairer than before.
Nature, thus I gaze on thee,
Gaze on earth and sky and sea,
Gaze and gaze, until my sight
Is tear-clouded by delight,
To pain united, in the stress
Of mystery and loveliness.

W. E. Hunter.

MARGARET.

Maidens, on this narrow bed,
Drop the flowers, but do not tread;
All that earth knew how to keep
Of Margaret is fast asleep.
Underneath the sod it lies,
With death's darkness in those eyes
That were wont to show at dawn,
Blue depths where our light was born;
For the radiant spirit flown,
Still our hearts unceasing moan—
For the radiant inmate dear,
That for one elysian year
Tarried on the earth, to see
If it might fit dwelling be
For a guest as pure as she,—
Then affrighted (woe the day!)
On swift wings, she fled away
To that country lying far,
Where the other angels are—
Fled! and left us nothing, save
To protect this little grave,
Which we keep, for love of her,
Ever unprofaned and fair.
Softly on her sacred bed
Scatter flowers, but do not tread.

W. E. Hunter.

THE RIVER OF LIFE.

Like the tide of a mighty river,
The years are running fast,
As they hurry us on to the future,
Like leaves on their current cast.

And that river shall merge in the ocean
Of a mystic eternity;
And the banks are the countless ages
That mark its course to the sea.

God breathes on the dim old forests,
Upon those banks that grow;
And the leaves from the stately branches
Are shed on the stream below.

A few there be on the river,
That whirl and softly glide
By the banks of Ease and Pleasure,
With a smooth and gentle tide.

But many are cast in the shallows
With a heavy lading of woe;
And the waters are bitter with sorrow,
And the tide to the sea runs slow.

Yet some sing blithe on their journey,
Though tossed on an angry wave;
And they conquer the terrors of tempests,
For the hearts of these are brave.

Still, oft as the future lowers,
  Like a tempest overhead,
They look for the light of a beacon
  In the refuge of the dead.

And they wonder what days shall be numbered,
  Or how many years be sped,
Ere sorrow shall seek for a resting
  In Nature's mouldy bed.

But that resting seems ever distant,
  Though sometimes, sudden and fast,
A leaf on the banks is stranded,
  And the River of Life runs past.

For on, and forever onward,
  The River of Life still runs,
Still strews its banks with its dead leaves,
  And wearies its living ones.

Yet though upon life's journey,
  Our hearts will needs despond,
When the Past gleams through a desert,
  And we know not what's beyond.

Far, far in the infinite Future,
  Immutable, dim, and vast,
Looms the haze of that mighty Ocean,
  Where the River will merge at last.

And this is life we are learning,
Patient and brave to be;
And the goal for which we are steering,
Is *Immortality*.

R. J. T. Jefferson.

THE HARMONIES OF WATERS.

Sing, sing, ye mellow streams and laughing brooks!
Sound every fountain and glad waterfall!
Through sylvan shades and dells,
Go singing to the sea!

More fair are ye, Nature's sweet bards, more fair
Than airy thought or fairy dream can be,
Whose beauties do not last,
But gleam and fade away!

Companions of immortal bards that sing,
More true are ye, more true in heart and voice
Than many glories be,
That bid the soul rejoice!

An open charm is yours—a subtle power:
The charm of beauty and the power of song,
To wile the pleasant hour
For many a weary mind!

Ye that have common beauty with the heavens,
With each bright star of heav'n and flow'r of earth,
And with the forests bare,
And waving mountain pines!

Ye that have common music with the spheres,
With each soft-singing orb and warbling bird,
And with the sounding sea,
And soughing of the wind!

When little songsters pour their melting lays,
How sweetly do your bird-like warblings rise;
But, in the hush of night,
More earnest tones ye raise.

The sun shall kiss you with his golden beams,
The moon with silver light shall crown you fair;
Sing on, melodious streams,
Sweet music lightens care!

R. J. T. Jefferson.

THE VOICES OF NATURE.

The various song
Of chanting birds that sweetly throng
Their native skies,
Or careless hopping, wanton on
Earth's leafy trees;
The busy hum of droning bees;
The chirruping and piping thrill
Of insect life on vale and hill;
The brooding turtle's coo;
The distant lowing herd and bleating sheep,
That soothe the drowsy sluggard's early sleep;
The croak and drum of frogs, and whistle too
That from the marsh arise;
The soughing wind;
The tempest raging and unkind,
In forest dim and lonely wood,
The cascade dashing down the glen;
The fountain laughing in the fen;
The wildly-warbling, running brook—
A thread of silver sheen,
That warbles past
Where poets love to dream,
With shades of spreading boughs o'ercast,
And golden sunshine oft between—
A little rhyme from nature's book;
The murmur of the river's flow,
Crooning soft and low,
Gliding, gliding to the sea,

Like Time to broad Eternity;
And, from its breast,
The startled whirr and cry of wildfowl from its nest,
Disturbed from rest;
The Ocean's changeful song,
Now low and sweet, now deep and strong—
Oft waking in an angry mood
In tempest rude,
Oft wantoning among the scattered shingle,
Where wild waves laugh
And idly chaff,
Till all come dancing in and break and mingle;
The watch-dog's honest bark;
The hearty cheer of chanticleer;
The cries of weary beasts, that shun
The face of man in desert dun
And forest wild and dark;
The thunder-bolt that shakes the ground;
The strong glad voice of man—of all the sweetest sound!
In these and other voices
This planet-world rejoices,
And rolls, and rolls with merry rhyme
Along its sphere,
And with a varied song sublime
Still strives to cheer
The flight of Ages and the march of Time!

Dormant in Man—and not in Man alone—
There is another voice—a deeper tone—
That lives and dies,
And lives again;
A yearning, dim and strange—

That, pining, mourns, and, mourning, longs in vain
For what's beyond the range
Of aught we know on earth—
Then sleeps or dies—mysterious from its birth!

'Tis in the seas and silent skies!
'Tis in each star that there doth rise!
In all things, small or great,
Of high or low estate!
It rises deep and solemn from the breast
Of brooding Nature, when at rest—
Unheard by Man, and yet intense
To some mysterious sense
That lies within;
A voice of pathos—pleading—as to win
An audience of Divine intelligence;
A mute appeal,
Yet eloquent, it doth reveal
A spirit there, that in its fever, moans and sighs
For unknown remedies!
Thus lives and dies,
Yet ever lives again,
As tending to some higher plane,
This sweetly urgent Voice, of deep, pathetic pain!
Beauty enhances Harmony,
And Harmony responds with equal glee,
Till both are interwoven in a sweeter dream!
Wherefore each common sight we see
Is linked to some sweet minstrelsy!
For oh! the whole intricate scheme
Of Voicing Nature tends to Good,
To Good that knoweth no alloy!
Behold it in her every mood

Of Sorrow, Rage, or Joy!
And so, to this behoof,
The golden threads shall yet unwind
On Nature's loom.
The warp shall yet be woven with the woof—
The heavens their sweetest joys shall yet unbind,
To banish wretched Woe afar to his ancestral gloom

R. J. T. Jefferson.

ON THE KALAHARI.

All day the fiery-hearted sun,
With burning rays of heat intense,
Has scourged the desert, wild and dun;
Nor stretched *one* shade from shrub or stone,
Where weariness could lay him down,
To shun his fierce offence!

The furious god, with strength amain,
With flaming brand, with shaft of fire,
Still smites the panting desert plain,
Whose muscles, nerve, and sinew strain
To spurn his vigour back again,
With furnace-breathing ire!

While zephyrs, trembling in affright,
With'ring beneath the awful blast,
Scarce dare attempt a fevered flight,
But inly pray for wishéd night
To flood the fulgent scene of blight,
And close the battle fast!

The hunter here shall careful tread
Across the blinding desert sheen;
For here and there, in sandy bed,
There lurks the yellow cobra dread,
Or lifts his hooded, deadly head
With unexpected spleen.

The dusky adder rears his crest,
And, with a sudden measured stroke,
Darts on the Secretary's breast,
That dares his secret haunt molest;
But soon those poisonous fangs shall rest
In death themselves provoke.

No singing bird is in the land!
Nor haunt of man, nor scattered farm,
No fierce, maurading Kafir band,
With war-song booming o'er the sand,
Shall sound the dread alarm!

But wandering Bushman lonely glide,
Exulting in his desert air;
Whose pigmy form, with antic stride,
His nimble-footed drudge beside,
Still drums his shield of toughened hide
Across the lion's lair.

And rav'ning beast and bird of prey,
The gaunt retainers of the wild,
Afar perceive the welt'ring clay—
The fleet gazelle, in hopeless play,
Fall in the gorging lion's way,
The desert's royal child.

The vulture, soaring overhead,
With gurgling, gutt'ral-throated cry,
By instinct taught, or habit led,
In aerial circles, spiral-spread,
Winds upward, on ethereal thread,
His prey afar to spy.

The fitful whirlwind, eddying past,
  Startles a herd of wild springbok,
Who spread their tails and sniff the blast,
Then bounding o'er the desert vast,
Speed like the whirlwind, hurrying fast,
  As from an earthquake's shock.

Then all is stillness! sky and sand
  Stretch waste and lonely, bleak and nude;
The wide rotundity around
Yields scarce a breath, and not a sound—
A spell has fallen on the land,
  The charm of solitude.

The golden glory of the Sun,
  As far athwart the arid plain
His beams are fading one by one,
Sinks low behind the desert dun,
And leaves this waste, that Man would shun,
  A desolate domain.

Those fleecy clouds that shone so white
  Ere he descended to his rest,
Now glow with splendours wondrous bright—
Green, gold, and sapphire's richest light,
That change their hues and fade as night
  Throws shadows in the west.

So sinks the warrior, faint and gory,
  And trails a lustre to his rest;
So sank old Egypt, worn and hoary,
And left behind, in name and story,
A trail, a splendour, and a glory
  That lingers in the West.

Then softly glides the moon, whose bright
  Unclouded beams in splendour reign,
And golden stars with dreamy light
Fill all the deep, the fiery night,
Like locusts in celestial flight
  Across the boundless plain.

Now Evening—like a lover's song,
  Elate with passion, joy, and pow'r—
Comes stealing gradually along:
The pregnant mind, composed and strong,
Aglow with thoughts that burn and throng,
  Is tempered to the hour;

Till silent, soft, I hear the praise
  Of Nature's universal hymn!
So sweet a song nor music plays,
Nor falling waters ever raise,
Nor is it heard in earthly lays—
  Mysterious and dim!

A strain of heavenly music lies
  In all God's universal plan!
From this great world its chords arise—
It lives, it breathes, it clings, it dies!
It echoes in the stars; it sighs
  Deep in the soul of Man.

All soundlessly its notes may steal,
  All silently may upward rise,
Yet Harmony would nought conceal,
And still some secret sense can feel
Soft music, like an organ's peal,
  Ascending to the skies.

And in this dream of solitude
  The flame of feeling brighter glows;
No sin, no sorrow shall intrude
Upon the charm of Nature's mood;
But thought, in silence, here shall brood,
  And passion know repose.

R. J. T. Jefferson.

THE SALT OF THE EARTH.

The Jews, as every one admits,
Are all you say, Rabinowitz:
The noblest and the best of races,
Whose kindly hearts belie their faces.
They've made in music, art, and letters
The nations of the world their debtors;
Who can deny it, when they own
A Heine and a Mendelssohn;
Or, in the realm of thought and prose, a
Colossal genius like Spinoza;
Nay—proudest boast of all their nation—
Freemantle as a blood relation?

Then in the Law their work we see:
The Sabbath and the I.D.B.;
In politics, who greater than
Their Beaconsfield or Lieberman?
They'd give the warlike Togo tips
In floating mines and sinking ships;
In fact, there are not any flies
Upon their business enterprise.

All this, my dear Rabinowitz,
The world, as I have said, admits;
In metaphor to state their worth,
"The salt," I'll call them, "of the earth."
Of this same salt I'd like to tell
A useful little parable.

In Scotland, as you know,—or should,—
Where porridge is the staple food,
They "sup them"—*vide* Scott or Galt—
With no concomitant but salt.
(The Southron, poor, misguided soul,
Puts sugar in his porridge bowl.)
Well, the good people of my tale,
Who lived on porridge, scones, and kail,
Had but one maid to wait and cook—
A slattern, grimy as the "crook";
A "fushionless" and "feckless" creature,
Without one grace of mind or feature.

Now, one "braw morn" the lass forgot
"Tae pit the sawt intil the pot."
In consequence, the breakfast-table
Was turned into a Tower of Babel;
The "big anes" "girned," the "wee anes"
"grat,"
The "guid-wife" tasted "them" and "spat,"
And (this sad fact I state with pain)
The "guidman" "took his name in vain!"

Next morning, going to the byre,
The farmer passed the kitchen fire;
He saw the porridge on the crook,
The salt-box in the chimney-nook
(The servant lassie wasn't nigh,
She'd gone outside to milk the "kye").
"I'll hae no cause again to sin,"
He said, and dropped a handful in.
The farmer's daughter next came through—
She dropped a little salt in too;

The farmer's wife, the farmer's son,
These also did as those had done;
Lastly, the servant-girl came back—
"I'll teach them I can parritch mak'!"
With her left hand the salt she shook,
And in her right the "spurtle" took.

The lassie brought the porridge "ben"
With conscious rectitude, and then,
With folded hands and pious face,
The farmer rose and said the grace,
Next tucked a napkin 'neath his chin,
And all were ready to begin.

. . . . . .

What followed next I will not state,
It is too painful to relate;
But this they all agreed upon:
That too much salt is worse than none.

"*Rip van Winkle.*"

AN OCEAN EREMITE.

To Captain Voss, bravest of mariners, who sailed round the world in a boat compared to which the galleons of Ithaca were towering ships.

BRAVE Captain, you have sailed away,
And now you rest upon the billows—
As unconcerned, I've heard you say,
As we who sleep upon our pillows.
Beneath your feet the shark may swim,
While overhead the petrel screeches,
You care no more than Dr. Jim
For Burton's or Molteno's speeches.

You heed not though the thunder peals,
The lightnings flash, you do not worry—
No more the tranquil Doctor feels
The ignominious snarls of Currey;
The rain may hiss, the billows crash—
You slumber, just like him unwitting
When Cronwright Schreiner's balderdash
Streams down upon the midnight sitting.

I wonder, Captain, why you chose
To bid farewell to ease and pleasure,
The snug fireside, the soft repose—
All that your fellow-mortals treasure?
Was it misfortune's icy breath
That gave you first the inclination?
And did you brave a liquid death
Because you dreaded liquidation?

Or was it unrequited love,
And did she jilt you for another?
Or murmur, gently as a dove,
"I look upon you as a brother"?
Or are you married to a wife
Whose tongue and temper drove you frantic,
And made you seek a quiet life
Amid the storms of the Atlantic?

Or happiness perhaps you find
Rests on a philosophic basis,
And think, with stoics, that the mind
The sum of human life embraces,
And all the joys that men surround
Are hostages to fortune given;
So, like Diogenes, you found
A tub is all you need to live in.

Ah! tranquil hermit of the sea—
A change of wind your only sorrow,
A gale your only enemy;
No wife to spend, nor friend to borrow;
The waves your only "bull and bear,"
And reckonings your only losses;—
What wonder that you do not care
For life's poor game of noughts and crosses?

"*Rip van Winkle.*"

HOLY JAMIE'S PRAYER.

(*With apologies to the shade of Burns.*)

O Lord, Thou'st gi'en me gear an' gold;
Wherever I hae bocht an' sold
Thou'st heapit profits manifold:
To Thee the glory!
So twa three maitters I mak' bold
To lay afore Ye.

Thou kenst I'm piously inclined;
That gift o' land Thou'lt ca' to mind—
I've got the contract a'most signed
To big a store
(Virtue and profit are combined)
Just by the door.

Twa vessels o' Thy chosen nation
Have aye enjoyed Thine approbation
(The ither Jamie is a caution!
He dings us a');
Thou'st raised us to our lofty station,
We dinna craw.

Canty and croose we pu'd thegither,
Workin' as brither works wi' brither,

We even trusted one anither—
Or verra near;
To help oorsels ilk helped the tither,
An' didna spier.

An' a' oor doin's, wrang or right,
Have aye fand favour in Thy sight:
Noo I'm a laird an' he's a knight.
But still a drappie
Add to my cup, for I'm no quite
Completely happy.

Thou kenst I'm noo an M.L.C.,
I signed the pledge, an' I agree
The Bible reprobates a lee;
But after a',
Sic a sma' thing 'twixt You an' me
Is nocht ava!

I canna' thole the Doctor's way,
He treats me as inferior clay;
He'll neither daff wi' me nor play
A game o' cartes:
O Lord, confound and blast, I pray,
His takin' arts!

Forbye, they didna' treat me fair:
That railway business fashed me sair,
An' the Excise on drink was mair
Than I could stan'—
Thou kenst I had a muckle store
O' dop on han'.

The Party I wud like to wreck,
An' wring the sneering Doctor's neck.
Guide me, I pray, to this effec',
Is my petition,
An' troth, I'll gie a thumpin' cheque
Tae Kirk or Mission!

"*Rip van Winkle.*"

A MUSEUM IDYLL.

READER, when you've wandered o'er
The dim Museum's cumbered floor,
And seen the grim and ghastly shapes,
As skeletons of men and apes,
Scorpions' tails and serpents' skins;
Nightmare beetles stuck on pins;
Stalactites and fossils all
Ranged in cases on the wall;
Corals, sponges, and the weeds
The silent floor of ocean breeds;
And the reptiles of the prime
That floundered in creation's slime;
Bushmen's skulls and meteorites,
And all such weird and uncouth sights—
Have you never longed to see
Some relic of Humanity—
Something that would bring to mind
The form and vesture of Mankind,
Something with the bloom and scent
Of sweet human sentiment?
Seek, then, the doorway where one sees
"Colonial Antiquities."
There the cabinets and walls
Sparkle with antique bocals,
Dresden shepherdesses fair,
Old blue Delft and priceless ware
Brought by Dutch East Indiaman
From the ports of old Japan.

Diaz's croziered pillar there
Stands by wicked Van Noodt's chair,
And the plate that graced his board
Is guarded by Van Riebeck's sword.
Near, an old bronze Buddhist bell
Graven with an Eastern spell—
With its *Mane padme om;*
Near, a Chinese ivory comb;
Near, an idol grinning white
Cased in ocean stalactite,
Which has suffered a sea-change
Into something rich and strange;
Near, a grim, terrific god;
Near, a teapot with an odd
Chinese dragon trailing round
Golden folds on copper ground.
There's a tiny English shoe
Of Morocco, cream and blue,
Made with all a cobbler's skill
By "Sam Miller in Cornhill."
Nothing more the legend says;
But I, in love with bygone days,
Look until I hear it tell
(Like a murmur in a shell)
Many a story quaint and sweet
Of the lady fair whose feet
Twinkled with a charm divine
Beneath her ample crinoline,
Making her tortured lovers dream
That heaven itself was blue and cream.

As down the Heerengracht she went
Each hat was doffed, each head was bent;

Envied the slave who held the red
Umbrella o'er her queenly head!
Envied the mastiff on whose back
One fair and slender hand lay slack!
Even the Fiscal pressed his hat
With fervour 'gainst his laced cravat,
And swept the pavement with a bow
Before the lovely Jonge-vrouw.

When Swellengrebel gave a ball,
He led her foremost down the hall;
Her lightest word or look was law
At picnic or at Wapenschaw;
In church, distracted beaux gave scant
Attention to the Predikant,
But read their sermon in the smile
That shone like sunshine down the aisle;
And once at least upon the lawn
Beneath the Castle walls at dawn
Hard breathing men with sword to sword
Tramped a circle on the sward,
Athirst to make a rival feel
The cruel chastisement of steel.

But now, I prithee, tell me, Muse,
How came she to wear English shoes?

An English ship one summer day
Let fall her anchor in the Bay,
Answered the Castle gun for gun—
The *Walpole* or the *Addison*,
Laden with sandalwood and spice,
And other goodly merchandize.

Ah! how the crew praised God to see
The welcome green of grass and tree;
And, oh, how pleasant was the sight
Of shady streets and houses white!

A boat was manned, and brought a score
Or so of invalids ashore;
With fever pale, with scurvy black,
Or yellow with the Yellow Jack.
Some went where by the old canal
Stood Van der Stel's sick hospital;
But one, of gentle birth and mien,
Was by the lady's father seen,
And lodged and nursed a month or so
Within their house in Bromner's Row.
(Old English travellers agree
To praise Cape hospitality.)
She nourished him with jellies fine,
Custards and rich Constantia wine;
And when he went to take the air,
She used to walk beside his chair.

He told her stories of the East,
Of savage man and savage beast;
Of palms that waved o'er coral isles,
And rivers full of crocodiles;
Of marble tombs with gems inwrought,
And sacrificial Juggernaut;
Of jewelled Begums and Bashaws,
Rodgers, Nabobs, and Sabberdaws;
Of pirate Angria and the fray
'Twixt Great Mogul and Grand Sedey;

Of Hindoo widows burnt alive,
And how he'd fought the French with Clive;
He watched her cheek go red and pale—
The light and shadow of his tale—
And on her eyelid shining clear
The crystal candour of a tear.

Ah, gentle reader, need I tell
The story that you know so well—
Of tender looks and stifled sighs,
Of ardent vows and soft replies?
It is, I think, enough to say
They loved as lovers love to-day,
And in the way of lovers swore
That no one ever loved before.
For centuries may come and go,
But Love and Youth are always so.
Nor need I rend your hearts to tell
The passion of their sad farewell.
But he, a moment to beguile
The April sunshine of a smile,
Asked for her choice 'twixt hat and gown,
A gift to bring from London Town;
And she, although her cheeks were wet,
Was in a moment all coquette—
"Your English fashions would, I fear,
But ill become my homely sphere;
Besides, you know not how to choose;
Bring me instead a pair of shoes."

With leaden feet the days passed o'er
The maid who watched upon the shore;

A piteous calendar, her cheeks
Grew paler with the passing weeks.
Her father marked the absent mood,
The tears, the pensive attitude;
And with affection's swift surmise
He guessed the reason of her sighs,
And tried to lock the stable door
(As parents oft had done before).
"A husband," to himself he said,
"Will drive this nonsense from her head."
But which fond suitor should he bless?
'Twas an *embarras de richesse*
'Twixt Van de Merwe, Jacques Theron,
The Captain of the Garrison,
Petrus de Witt, or Van Breda,
Or Cloete of Constantia.
And then the Fiscal—fat and old—
What matter? he had power and gold,
A farmstead bowered in oak and vine,
The fairest in the Drakenstein;
Coffers of dollars and doubloons,
Gold mohurs, pagodas, ducatoons;
And in his cupboards, stored away,
The priceless treasures of Cathay.

Straight to the Fiscal's house he went,
Nor paused to ask the girl's consent;
Arranged the match without delay,
Drew up the deeds and named the day.
In vain the tears that fell like rain—
The prayers, the protests all in vain.
The Fiscal forced a loathed caress
With elephantine playfulness.

'Twas now a twelvemonth since the day
Her English lover sailed away,
And 'neath the garden oaks, forlorn,
A week before the wedding morn,
She sat—a book upon her knee—
Alone in pensive reverie.

The menace of the old bridegroom
Was dreadful as an open tomb.
It yawned so imminently near,
Poor dove, she sickened with the fear!
"My heart has called so loud," she said,
"He must come if he be not dead!"

A sudden step—a look—a cry—
"'Tis thou!" and, with a kiss, "'Tis I!"
"See, I have brought thy English shoes!
Said'st thou I knew not how to choose?
These for thy feet—this golden band
Will grace the whiteness of thy hand!"

From Signal Hill to Wittebloem,
From Kirstenbosch to Roodebloem,
With cannon, bugle, bell and horn,
They ushered in the wedding morn.
The Fiscal went with stately stride
To wish good-morrow to his bride;
But he was greeted with a groan—
Alack! alack! the bird had flown.

Far out beneath a cloud of sail,
A ship bowed to the favouring gale.

They heard above the ocean swell,
Ring faint but clear a wedding bell.
And where the boat put off they found
A tiny shoe upon the ground.

As scent of faded rose-leaves dead
With dreams of summer fills the head,
As the faint murmurs in a shell
Of green foam-crested surges tell,
So this forgotten little shoe
Told me the tale I've told to you.

"*Rip van Winkle.*"

A SLUMBER SONG OF THE PUBLIC GARDENS, CAPE TOWN.

> "*I'se gwine home to Dixie,*
> *I'se gwine no more to wander.*"
> —Old Plantation Song.

Soft haze upon the mountain and a haze upon the sea,
High noon above the Gardens and shadows on the way;
And twenty weary people slipping out of time awee,—
Out of time and out of trouble, on a hot midsummer's day.
Blow softly, silver trumpets, in a fairy serenade,
Ye lilies of St. Joseph, swinging lightly over-head.

In the shadows of the Gardens the wearied come to rest,
In the spacious dusk and quiet the fevered blood is stilled;
While sleep, on tiptoe stepping, lays aside the hopeless quest,
Takes away the fag of travel and the promise unfulfilled;
In white and gold and purple the wondrous petals gleam;
In white and gold and purple is the wondrous slope of dream.

Here be ever Jew and Gentile, Briton, German, Dago, Pole,—
Mostly young and mostly reckless, some unkempt or liquor-stained;
Here and there a grizzled hobo, or be-painted, draggled troll;
Here and there an eager seeker for the labour yet ungained;
Not alone for rank or station may Titania's maidens bring
Happy dreams of happy Dixie to the people slumbering.

Here's a lad—and ne'er a razor licked the smoothness of his chin,—
Curly-headed, slim and supple, coiled within a corner seat,
Worn at heel, and frayed at elbow, blistered foot, and roughened skin—
God! how far we have to wander for a little bread to eat!
Puck, who puts on mortal eyelids filmy cobwebs, hither, quick!
Take the boy across the water, he is ill or mammy-sick.

Fires of life among your ashes, what have ye to give or gain,
In that haggard shell and ancient, snoring on with mouth agape?
What among your outworn pleasures hold ye now, and what remain,
Heartsome still,—a rank old cutty and a little juice of grape?

Still with these a man may travel to the last foot-weary
mile,
Halting for a dream of Dixie in the garden depths
awhile.

In the mine's untrammelled shanty or Johannesburg
cabouse,
O'er the cards and vicious whisky, men may query in
a jest,
How she struck the trail to Cape Town in her paint
and lacquered shoes,
With her skirts' pathetic draggle, hopeless, weary
like the rest,
Here, within the pure bright Gardens, let the fairy folk
undo
What the mortal folk have made her, for a blissful hour
or two.

Evermore through sun and shadow wafting down upon
the grass,
Takes the dreamers back to Dixie—wheresoever that
may be,—
To the lost hearth and the mother, to the lost youth
and the lass,
Over all the plains and mountains, over all the
leagues of sea:
All roads but lead to quiet, though the heat and noise
be long,—
Grace for the sleepers, by your leave, and this their
slumber song!

John Runcie.

VAN RIEBECK.[1]

Mayhap it was the Lady Moon,
Or that dream-laden opiate
"Magaliesberg," when hours were late,
And wakeful crickets shrilled their tune;

Or maybe 'twas the soul of grape,
That as the eve of Christmas drew
To Christmas morning, woke anew
The old-world shadows of the Cape.

I saw Van Riebeck standing near,
In leathern jerkin, sword in hand;
His boat was beached upon the sand,
And three sea-lights were burning clear.

A little man he seemed to me,
Thick-set and firm and keenly-eyed,
Broad-belted, gloved, and hatted wide,
With buckled shoe and hosened knee.

Like one who, musing, seemed to know
The fancies thronging through the mind,
He answered what my glance defined,
With that quaint grace of long ago:—

[1] Van Riebeck—one of the earliest Dutch Governors of the Cape.

"Lo, ye have built your city white
Where once a little fort was raised,
And where the lumbering zeekoe grazed
Your Noël carols ring to-night.

"And where a day's march could not span,
A little hour will set you down
In comfort in your Simon's Town,
Without a fear for beast or man.

"From here to yon far river's flow
Your Royal flag is floating free;
'Twas Cromwell's flag we met at sea,
When Tromp and Blake fought long ago.

"How far anon your way may bend,
The Book of Fate alone foretells;
Mayhap your steel-drawn parallels
Will bind these countries end to end.

"How far ye go in days to be,
I know not; but in days gone by,
Behold! the light in yon dark sky
Was kindled by our folk and me.

"Ye may forget! In this large day
What boots a little fort or kraal,
With teeming street and window'd wall,
And crowded wharves of Table Bay?

"But this I say, and this I know,
Whatever scribes may think or write,—
Behold, behind one man is Night,
And from one man the Tale must flow."

And then he passed. The Bay was bright
With riding lights, but like a smoke
Three high-pooped ships in canvas broke,
And drifted swiftly out of sight.

John Runcie.

CROSSING THE HEX MOUNTAINS.

At Tweefontein in the moonlight the little white tents shine,
And a cry comes out of the darkness from those who guard the line;
The panting heart of the engine pulsed through the resting cars,
And beyond are the quiet mountains, and above are the quiet stars.

Sinister rise the mountains, jagged and bleak and bare,
Cloven and rent and fissured by fire and torrent there;
But the moon is a tender lady that loves not sights like these,
And in her spell transfigured, all things must soothe and please.

Far on the veldt behind us shone the steel-drawn parallels,
And beneath was the famished river fed by the famished wells,
And behind the shuttered windows, and beneath the hooded light,
Folk in the train were sleeping through all the wondrous night.

But I was out on the platform waiting the whistle shrill
That would break in a lustre of echoes right on the face of the hill;

Break on the face of the mountain and lose themselves
in the pass,
Where the rails are like threads of silver, and the
boulders smooth as glass.

Forth with the grinding of couplings, the hissing and
snorting of steam,
Till the rails spun out behind her like spider-threads
agleam,
Till she roared at the foot of the mountain, and brawled
through the echoing glen,
Roaring, rocking, and ringing out her pæan of con-
quering men.

Right to the edge of a boulder, ominous, big, and
black;
Plucking our hearts to our parching throats with fear
for the open track;
Then forth like a driving piston straight from its iron
sheath,
Till the wind stormed down on our faces, and we could
not see nor breathe.

Looping, climbing, and falling, panting and swooping
she sped,
Like a snake at the foot of the mountain, with her great
white lamp ahead;
Shouldering the heavy gradients, heedless of breathing
spells,
And racing away like a maddened steed down the
sloping parallels.

Then out of De Doorns she thundered, and over the
starved Karoo,
Dwindling the hills behind her, farther and farther she
flew;
And I know not which to praise the more—these moon-
shot hills of God,
Or the genius of the men who planned and made the
glorious road.

John Runcie.

THE VELDT FOLK.

In these great spaces they abide for ever,
Nor may they hive in cities even as we,
Whose toil from crowded shire and teeming river
Finds markets over-sea.

Nor they, like Israel whom the Lord befriended,
With flock and herd and bountiful increase,
Were searched by war, that so when war was ended,
All men might dwell in peace.

Upon their lives the sun and moon slow-swinging,
Through days and years o'er vast, untroubled skies,
Have wrought an affluent peace, a love fast-clinging
To freedom large and wise.

By narrow laws we judge the farmer people,
Whose larger outlook we would fain gainsay,
Even as we fain would coop beneath a steeple
The God to whom we pray.

God gave the Law in lightning and in thunder,
To that lost nation bann'd and unredeemed,—
A pastoral people, whom He swept asunder
Because of Baal they dreamed.

Even so to these, the Veldt Folk, God hath given
The near communion in His Temple vast,
Wherein He speaketh yet, in awful levin,
And in the thunder blast.

We judge by roaring loom and crowded harbour,
By teeming street and plenteous gear and gold,
Where Greatness dwells; and yet within an arbour
Sits Wisdom as of old.

All men conserve their Faith who, dwelling lonely
In those vast breadths of kopje, stream, and plain,
Fulfil their happiness by reason only
That wealth to them is vain;—

That wealth is vain, and Freedom more than cattle;
Ay, more than life, as when in troubled shires,
Of old were gathered up to awful battle
Our own victorious sires.

John Runcie.

THE HOGSBACK PEAK.[1]

I.

O HOARY monarch, rough and rude,
Rising above thy vassal hills,
Far from the music of the rills,
The very son of Solitude!

Far, far above the 'wildering ways
Where flow the chequered streams of life,
In discords harsh of stress and strife,
Or suave in song of peace and praise.

No verdure decks thy rocky head,
No flowers bloom around thy crest—
Thou'rt bare as the deserted nest
Of birds that o'er the seas have fled.

Only the golden buds of morn,
The roses of retreating eve,
And lily-mists serenely weave
Gay garlands round thy brows forlorn.

And when the weary world doth rest,
In shelt'ring night's secure embrace,
The moonbeams kiss thy mournful face,
The still stars sparkle round thy crest.

[1] Hogsback Peak is one of the highest points in the Amatola range of mountains.

II.

The breezes blithe of deep-voiced spring
  Whisper within thine ear sweet tales
  Of musing woods and laughing vales,
Where brooklets babble, wild birds sing;

But pale the pleasure they impart,
  For lo, they sing of alien themes;
  Spring's subtle tremors, magic dreams,
Ne'er come to gladden thy sad heart:

But barrenness for ever flings
  Around thy brows her pallid shroud,
  And silence holds thee like a cloud,
And thou art loneliest of things!

Like to a soul that doth possess
  No kin in others, but each day
  It wears itself in grief away
At its own utter loneliness!

III.

Art thou not weary, full of woe,
  Old sentinel, whose stony eyes
  Have watched the sleepless centuries
Unhasting, silent come and go?

Thou seest still from year to year
  The strange transitions of the earth,
  Grave Autumn's prime, and Springtide's birth,
Repletive Summer, Winter bare;

And men and nations hast thou seen
  Flourish awhile and have their day—
  Like Spring's frail flow'rs they pass away,
And leave no trace of having been.

But thou remainest: changeless still,
  Patient and peaceful, while above
  The glad sky smiles on thee with love—
And thou art blest, O lonely hill!

F. C. Slater.

IN THE MATOPPOS.

In lone Matoppos now he lies,
  Can we forget?
Our leader, seer; his hills, his skies
  Are near him yet!

Like to the Hebrew seer of old,
  Who, within sight
Of promised Canaan, passed away
  On Nebo's height—

So he: he only saw the dawn
  Of promised day
Break o'er the hills of his lov'd land:
  He might not stay

To see the splendour of that noon,
  For which he wrought
Thro' the long, weary, waiting years
  With anxious thought.

Strange to our purblind eyes the tools
  Which, with due care,
The great Inventor takes to build
  His Kingdom here.

He sought to further the strong sway
  Of Britain's Isle,
But all unconsciously for God
  He wrought the while.

In lone Matoppos now he lies,
  Our leader, seer;
His hills, his woods, his streams, his skies
  Are ever near!

F. C. Slater.

IN A MAIZE FIELD.

Kaffir woman, her babe bound to her back, sings as she hoes:—

The sun's flail threshes the maize fields,
The heat-chaff[1] flickers and stings;
Songless and still in the branches
The birds droop listless wings.
The sun lashes the maize fields;
O for a cooling breeze!
The birds are still in the branches,
The cattle are under the trees.

Up in the kraal on the hillside
Thy father drowsily lies,
Quaffing the honeyed *qilika*,[2]
Cursing the troublesome flies.
Thy father sleeps, while thy mother,
Beneath the sun's white blaze,
Toils from day-dawn to darkness,
Hoeing the shimmering maize.

Umfundisi[3] tells us that somewhere
There lies a region of Rest:
Shall we go seek for it, *Nyana*,[4]
This country of the Blest?

[1] Heat-waves somewhat resembling chaff rising from a threshing-floor. [2] Beer made from honey. [3] Teacher or preacher. [4] Son.

No maize fields there for hoeing,
No sun with scorching heat;
And they who seek shall find it,
And find it passing sweet.

F. C. Slater.

"LALA, 'SANA LWAM!"

(KAFFIR LULLABY SONG.)

THE hoeing of day is done,
The weary heat of the sun,
The wood is gathered, the water drawn,
And now we can rest
Till the coming of dawn;
Till the coming of dawn, my babe.
Lala, lala, 'mtwana wam;
Lala, 'sana lwam![1]

O soothing season of night!
Bringing a respite sweet
To aching hands and weary feet,
From the burden of toil
And the sting of the heat;
O soothing season of night!
Lala, lala, 'mtwana wam;
Lala, 'sana lwam!

Calm and fair is the night,
The moon shines over the hill,
Flooding with magical light
Forest and field and rill.
All is peaceful and still,

[1] Sleep, sleep, my child;
Sleep, my babe.

Save the hungry jackal's howl.
Calm and fair is the night,
The moon shines over the hill.
Lala, lala, 'mtwana wam;
Lala, 'sana lwam!

F. C. Slater.

"'ZANI 'NKOMO."

Kaffir herd-boy sings:—

BRIGHT blooms the sun on the grass-glad meadow,
Bright blooms the sun in the fern-fond rill;
Sun-rays dart thro' the dream-haunted woodland,
Sunbeams laugh on valley and hill.
'Zani 'nkomo,[1] *whee-ou-whoo*, come along my cattle;
Whee-ou-whoo, come to the green hillside;
Linger as ye list in cool, quiet grass-glades,
From white morn to wan eventide.

Deep in the dim woods I'll wander thro' the daytime,
Feasting on honey and juicy roots;
Happy as a hill-cloud I'll wander thro' the woodlands,
Feasting at will on wild-wood fruits.
'Zani 'nkomo, *whee-ou-whoo*, with my dog and *gqudu*,[2]
Swift thro' the woods will I chase the birds that fly;
Swift thro' the woods will I hunt the nimble *'mpunzi*,[3]
All thro' the day till night draws nigh.

Slow sinks the sun on cloud-claspt hill-tops,
Still shadows creep from the nest of night;
Slow sinks the sun, and only on the hill-tops
Now may be seen the lilies of night.
'Zani 'nkomo, *whee-ou-whoo*, come along, my cattle;
Swift to *ub'hlanti*,[4] milking-time has come.
'Zani 'nkomo, *whee-ou-whoo*, come on, my cattle;
Come along, dear ones, come on home.

F. C. Slater.

[1] Come, cattle.
[2] Stick with knob.
[3] A species of antelope.
[4] Cattle enclosure.

THE PALACE OF POESY.

Once on a blithe, blue morn in sun-lov'd Spring,
I laid me down beneath a whispering tree
Whereon the little birds did sweetly sing;

Hard by, a shade-fleck'd streamlet babbled free,
As its swift course it onward still did wing
To mingle in the music of the sea.

The snowy cloudlets o'er the smiling deep
Of heaven serenely wandered to and fro,
As o'er the meadows stray a flock of sheep,

As thoughts that thro' the brain their shadows throw;
The young spring winds did thro' the forest creep,
Laden with sweet perfumes, and murmurs low.

These pleasant sounds and odours did combine
To lull my senses, and soft sleep did steal
My soul into her shadowy lands divine.

. . . . . .

I dream'd I stood upon a headland tall,
Beside the olden, many-voiced ocean:
The sun's glad rays were flashing over all,—

With suave puissance, and with rhythmic motion,
The billows lashed the adamantine wall
Of the rude, rocky shores; and from that Ocean

There rose a stately mountain dark and blue,
On whose far peak there shone a palace fair—
A wondrous sight! And as I gazed there flew

From the gemm'd porches of that palace rare
Some god or angel with a golden lyre,
And, sailing into the pellucid air,

He sang to me and set my soul on fire!—
"O dreamer, wouldst thou scale the summit where
Yon palace stands? If this be thy desire

"Thy task is great, for at thy feet there flows
The mighty Sea of Knowledge, thro' whose deep
Thy path shall lie,—for only he who knows

"May hope to climb yon silent dizzy steep
Of thought sublime, on whose far peak there glows
The palace where sweet Poesy doth keep

"Her daughters fair, the sweet-voiced Muses Nine."
And when the voice was still I strove to speak,
And faltering said: "O son of Song divine,

"Pray tell me how shall one so mean and weak
In knowledge, and with shallow thought like mine,
E'er climb those heights that palace fair to seek?"

Lo! as I spake a ghostly mist arose
And hid that fairy vision from my sight;
Fled was the palace fair of flaming rose!

Faded that mountain steep, that ocean bright!
And ev'n as one bow'd down with nameless woes
I sighed and wept in sorrow infinite.

And as I wept swift changed was the scene,—
And far away amidst the ancient hills,
Begirt with shadowy forests dark and green,

I sat and listened to the tinkling rills
Which rippled softly thro' the gloom and sheen
Of the still woods—a sound that ever fills

The mind with peaceful thought—and lo! I heard
A voice serenely sweet, that bathed with light
Of hope renewed my languid life, and stirr'd

My inmost soul to visions pure and bright,—
A voice divine,—sweeter than song of bird,
Sweeter than the ringing of the foam-bell white

Upon the list'ning shore, or lone wind's sigh
Thro' echoing forests,—thus it spake to me:
"Fear not, O dreamer! not o'er mountains high

"Of thought sublime, nor yet thro' the deep sea
Of knowledge doth Poesy's Palace lie;
But in the plains of Life, where live and die

"Mankind, in joy and sorrow, smiles and tears,
In aspirations great, in longings vain,
In strife and sin, in gloomy doubts and fears;

"Yea, dreamer, down in life's great sombre plain
The Muses dwell, for song was truly made
To soothe life's sorrows and relieve its pain!

"Therefore be not cast down nor yet afraid,
For if in singing thou dost ever strive
To comfort fellow-travellers thro' life's glade,

"To cheer them on, their failing hopes revive
With the glad tinkle of thy simple lays,
Thine efforts shall be blest; thy songs survive

"In some fond hearts. But ne'er let human praise
Be goal to which thine inmost hopes aspire;
Be as the brooklet that thro' lonely ways

"Unconscious pours its treasure: no desire
Of praise or glory prompts its generous will;
Let music of thy soul attune thy lyre,—

"For, only songs born of the authentic thrill
Of soul-pulsations truly reach the soul
Of man, and there strike answering chords."

F. C. Slater.

LOVE VOWS.

I WOULD I were a mailed knight,
A mailed knight and bold;
To battle for my lady bright,
And honour's crown of gold.
But tho' I forged thro' many a fight,
And conquered foes untold,—
My sweet, my dear, by heaven I swear
This solemn vow:
My love for you were not more true
Than now.

I would I were a bard of fame,
A bard with laurel crown'd;
With great acclaim, my lady's name
The world to sing around.
But tho' your praise in loving lays
I sing till earth resound,
My sweet, my dear, by heaven I swear
This solemn vow:
My love for you were not more true
Than now.

F. C. Slater.

SONNET.

FLOWERS.

Roses I saw, and poppies all alight
With colours of the dawn, and rainbow hues
Drawn from the sun and all the secret dews
Distilled upon them from the brooding night,
And delicate sweet-peas so purely dight
They must have grown where icy winds refuse
To blow, or haply where nuns dream and muse
In holy meditation, out of sight
Of the rough world;—flowers of moonlight sheen
And golden hearts, and velvet pansies turned
The room they stood in to a garden scene
Of loveliness so exquisite, I yearned
Through all my soul to be as chastely clean
As these, and more my raptured eye discerned.

Herbert Price.

SPRING SONNET.

GREEN grass, green trees, and greenest wildernesses
Of cool green ferns; and ah! such long green spaces
Sleeping within the sunlight's warm embraces!
Green-shadowed rills that gurgle through green cresses,
And deep green nooks wherein the locust dresses
Her shining wings; green dells, and high green places
O'er which bright swarms of sportive insect graces
Flash and are gone, and know not what distress is;
Green-covered spots; green fields were greenness less is
By reason of the clouds of blowing daisies
That variegate the verdure with their faces;
Green arbours where all greenest loveliness is
Like little billowy puffs of maiden tresses!
All these leave on the soul their joyous traces.

Herbert Price.

DROUGHT.

Lo! all the land is dry and parched with heat,
And all the hills are white with withered grass
That hath no touch of greenness; and, alas!
See how the lately waving fields of wheat
Droop wearily towards a sure defeat
Before the scorching winds that hourly pass
Over the arid earth; how like a glass
The hot flats shimmer underneath the heat,
More strenuous as the stifling weeks increase,
Of quenchless and unmitigable rays,
That make a terror of the rainless days;
And the clear vault of fire, that will not cease
To heap with death the long and dusty ways,
And burn out life from all the leafless trees.

Herbert Price.

MORNING, 24TH MAY 1905.

Slow mists were on the ridges all around,
And in the kloofs; and on the mountain side
They moved and swayed, a softly flowing tide
That rose against the rocks without a sound,
Then circled back upon the lower ground
In folding mazes that would not abide
A moment there, but wandered far and wide
In billowy waves no shores were set to bound.

Our raptured souls were in that magic sea,
And in those wreaths that journeyed with the wind
Were all our thoughts, and in each eager mind
The beauty of that morning mystery
Became an exultation, yet to be
Remembered when our mortal eyes are blind.

Herbert Price.

THE MOUNTAIN TOP.

What witching hours of wild delight are here!
  What amplitude of healing airs that sweep
  Downward to rouse the dreamers from their sleep
Far in unhealthful valleys! and what cheer
Of gleeful laughter wins the soul from fear
  To gambol on these lusty heights like sheep
  Glad with the spring! In what still pools and deep
Shine spaces of the crystal atmosphere!
What flowers are here! what scented dells of shade!
What carols make the mornings musical!
  What fragrant coils of everlastings glow
In secret spots along each sinuous glade!
What luminous waters rush and pause to fall!
  What exultations through the spirit flow!

Herbert Price.

QUATRAINS.

I.

Close not thy lids on idle dreams,
O voyaging soul aghast!
Safe through the mazes of life's streams
No dreamer ever passed.

II.

Who fails in his allotted march
To make one step for right,
Spoils the wide curve of heaven's arch,
And mars the infinite.

III.

The soul that dies by flesh o'erwon,
Is like some tender growth
On which a fetid adder coils,
And kills in folds of sloth.

IV.

Eagles mount on easy wing;
Larks are light of feather;
Man, the heavy-footed thing,
Adds stars and suns together.

V.

Beauty born of winds and suns,
  Lithe strength of storms and showers,
She gathered nature's graces once
  Who sleeps beneath the flowers.

VI.

The peaks that pierce the deepest hue
  Though lofty, free, and still,
Shine with no light of quickening dew
  Like lowly vale and hill.

VII.

Roses from polluted soil
  Draw delicious odours forth,
So doth virtue's secret toil
  Sweeten noisome dens of earth.

VIII.

The flower that on the arid rock
  Shows all her rich attire,
Is like the face that smiles to mock
  Fate's fell and fierce desire.

Herbert Price.

THE FIRST DAWN.

WHAT blackness reigned before a star was born,
When far across void spaces of the night
The pale diaphanous wonder of the dawn
Rose ghostlike on the unaccustomed sight
Of all the unimaginable eyes
(Strange creatures of the darkness sure were bred)
That stared towards the east in wild surmise,
To see the changing colours throb and spread,
Innumerable films of rosy fire
Flushing the orient with their glowing tints,
Clothing the haggard plains in rich attire,
And flashing from great hills of naked flints,
Until the gaunt and hungry earth displayed
The jewelled splendour of a queen arrayed.

Herbert Price.

MOODS.

When on the ocean's pulsing breast
I lie in wonder's heart arest,
And hear her cosmic music roll,
As from some mist-enshrouded goal
Enchanted voices of applause
Float up to visionary shores,
Then Hope, awakened from her dream,
Renews again her sheeny gleam.

When softly from the breathing earth
I see the flowers having birth,
When buds appear, and flowers soon
Enrich the golden afternoon
With scents and colours sweet and bright
Till hearts absorb a new delight,
Then all the waste and drift of things
Is covered by Love's brooding wings.

Herbert Price.

FATE.

Our fate is round us like a viewless net,
Woven of thoughts, inheritances, deeds,
And all the drift of circumstantial weeds
About the shores of being that are set,
Imponderable strands no mortal fret
Hath power to fray; the inevitable seeds
Sown by the gods along the cosmic meads
(The gods who sow and never know regret)
Throw round us their invisible intents;
Webs knitted in the house of destiny
Enmesh the yearning visage of the soul,
And though it cry, the sequence of events,
The march and order of the mighty whole
Remain unchanged through all eternity.

Herbert Price.

THE LION'S DREAM.

(AN INCIDENT OF THE ZOO.)

Now he recalleth his triumphant days,
And fervid throes of equatorial fire
Thrill through his frame, till re-aroused desire
(His dream so shows him all his desert ways)
To lap the scented blood of what he slays,
Lifts him upon his feet; a lurid ire
Burns in his eyes, a shaggy horror stays
His mane erect in aspect grim and dire.

His eyes that are the mirrors of his dream,
As slowly from their deeps the vision fades
Lose all the light wherewith they blazed and shone,
His limbs relent, and all the savage gleam
Droops in his mane to ever gloomier shades,
And with his sleep his royal mood is gone.

Herbert Price.

THE BROKEN MAST.

One morn in Spring, my love and I
Went down the hillside to the sea;
We watched the sea-birds wheeling fly,
Wild as the waves are, and as free.

The water broke about our feet
And flung us many a fleet foam-feather;
Ah, love, that day was passing sweet,
Spring, sea, and thou and I, together.

High stranded by some long-spent wave
The fragments of a shattered mast
We found, and straight our mood waxed grave
O'er unknown woes and dangers past.

We pictured Norway's pine-clad hills,
Where once this long-lost waif had stood,
Then sombre with late autumn's chills,
Ere Winter's word had stilled each flood.

We thought how, in some dockyard's bound,
The new ship's mast was deftly stept,
And how, 'mid acclamative sound,
The vessel to the water leapt;

And how the helmsman sadly turned
The ship's head from the Polar Star
To where strange constellations burned
O'er lands from his loved home afar.

And how the stout ship stood the shock,
Perchance, of many a raging gale,
Till on some fatal shaft of rock,
She perished, 'mid the water's wail.

"Dear one," she said, "in future time,
When you and I are fast asleep;
Some waif of ours, perchance this rhyme,
Time's waves upon Life's shore may keep.

"And lovers in their lives' sweet spring
Will read their story in our own,
And feel, as from a sea-bird's wing,
Light teardrops on their eyelids blown.

"When they, content, have lulled their bliss
To slumber light with painless sighs,
Before they wake it with a kiss,
They'll scan our thought with chastened eyes;

"And e'en as this dead thing hath power
To lift from us Time's fallen veil,
Our song, like some dim book-pressed flower,
Will Life's lost perfume new exhale."

W. C. Scully.

THE NAHOON.

WHERE the breath of the ocean encumbers
The air with its languorous balm,
And weaves o'er the forest that slumbers
The spell of its health-giving calm;
There the spirit of Peace hath its dwelling,
And, rich round the wanderer's feet,
In the groves where clear waters are welling,
The dream-fragrant lotus blooms sweet.

The lagoon like a scimitar gleaming
In the conqueror ocean's strong hand,
Pierces through the bright hills that, a-dreaming,
Through seasons and centuries stand;
Whilst the tide, with its message of greeting,
Sweeps up from the surf to the rills,
And the murmurous joy of their meeting
The valley with melody fills.

Here each season, like spring, is a revel
Of flower and sunshine and song,
And leads to the banquet its novel
Delights in a wildering throng;
As a pageant of beauty, with guerdon
Of richness to spirit and sense,
Come the days bearing hither their burden
Of sweets for the hours to dispense.

Down rocks that the lichen makes hoary,
The garlanded tendril-blooms trail
To the woods where the wing of the lory
The scarlet geranium strikes pale;
O'er the aloe the honey-birds quiver
Like emeralds, feathered with flame,
While the kingfisher's plunge sends a shiver
Of light through the depths of the stream.

Sweet orchids, in shadow reposing,
Sigh scents on the path of the bee;
Bright lilies in splendour enclosing,
Woo butterflies over the lea;
Soft moss, for a dryad fit pillow,
Droops thick over tree-trunk and stone
In the depths of each fern-brimming hollow,
Where the moistening sea's breath is blown.

O'er a league of fair woodland and meadow,
Rich in flower and grass and soft fern,
Where the antelope couches in shadow,
And the curlew pipes over the tarn,
Lie the infinite waters of wonder,
Man's terror and scourge and delight—
That rave with the tempest in thunder,
Or laugh like a child in the light.

Here the silence at midnight is shattered
By the cry of the breakers in pain,
When the strength of their legion is scattered,
And their might is as curbed with a chain;

Here the snowstorms of foam, fierce as fire,
Shine bright 'neath the stars that they hide,
When the resonant surges retire
From the rock that their rage hath defied.

Yet the heart that is weary of beating
Finds here from its fever surcease,
And grief of compassion finds greeting
Where the war-song of waters is peace;
Where the roar of the strife-smitten world
Is drowned in the chant of the sea,
Lo! the banner of peace is unfurled,
And the soul in its thraldom is free.

W. C. Scully.

THE BUSHMAN'S CAVE.

I STAND behind the waterfall
That downward shoots, till spent in spray,
It clinging clasps the rocky wall
That beetles o'er the river way;
A secret cave is here fast hid
In swathing bands of forest dense,
A casket with a rocky lid,
Within the stream's circumference.

'Tis here the vanished bushman dwelt—
He, with his brood, long years ago—
Beneath this ledge; and deftly spelt,
In pictures that still freshly glow,
The wild-wood creatures, not more wild
Than he, who, hiding thus apart,
His idle days and hours beguiled
At his strange, harmless limning art.

Here human creatures hoped and loved,
And feared and hated in their turn—
Rejoiced when fortune kindly proved,
And over life's despites did mourn;
Here women nursed their babes, here maids
Oft listened to their lovers rude;
Here death has thrown a deeper shade
Of darkness o'er the gloomy wood.

There, in yon cleft, is still the mark
Of bygone fires whose flames are dead
As those who lit them—life's strange spark
And glowing ember, each has sped.
And by the south wind's gentle sigh
The flickering, sunlit leaves are turned,
And from the cliffs the brown hawks cry
To-day, as when each brightly burned.

Through fancy's glass I see around
The shades of long-dead forms arisen;
They move and breathe without a sound,
And live in their brief poet-season;
There lie their bows, their arrows keen,
Whilst on the fire an earthen pot
Holds, simmering slowly, foul and green,
The arrow-poison's fœtid clot.

There lies an antelope, fresh killed,
By hungry stomachs close surrounded,
And there's a wicker-basket filled
With luscious locusts, freshly pounded;
And look, the glowing coals upon,
A scaly snake is quickly toasting,
Whilst on that ledge, there in the sun,
The hunters of their deeds are boasting.

'Tis gone; 'twas but a glimpse, a flash,
That for an instant lit the past;
I see now but the water dash
In quivering spray-sheets downward cast,

And on the rocks, in deathless hue,
The records of a perished race
That from this land of ours withdrew
In silence, leaving scarce a trace.

Poor waifs upon creation's skirts,
Your melancholy history,
To men of earnest mind, asserts
A problem, and a mystery:
Whence came ye? Wherefore did ye live
To wither from the sphere of being—
And why did Nature to ye give
No ears to hear, nor eyes for seeing?—

The music and the light whereby
All men must walk, to guide your steps
Along life's path beneath the sky,
Between the snaring pitfall deeps;
Ye sank from something higher far,
And, distanced in life's struggling race,
Your last and failing remnants are
Erased from off the great world's face.

W. C. Scully.

'NKONGANE.

Old—some eighty, or thereabouts;
Sly as a badger alert for honey;
Honest perhaps—but I have my doubts—
With an eye that snaps at the chink of money;
Poor old barbarian, your Christian veneer
Is thin and cracked, and the core inside
Is heathen and natural. Quaint and queer
Is your aspect, and yet, withal, dignified.

When your lips unlock to the taste of rum,
The tongue runs on with its cackle of clicks—
That, like bubbles, break as their consonants come,
For your speech is a brook full of frisky tricks.
You love to recall the days of old—
That are sweet to us all, for the alchemist Time
Strangely touches the basest of metals to gold,
And to-day's jangled peal wakes to-morrow's rich chime.

But not the past in a moony haze,
That shines for us sons of Europe, is yours—
You glow with the ardour of blood-stained days
And deeds long past—you were one of the doers—
Of spears washed red in the blood of foes,
Of villages wrapped in red flame, of fields
Where the vultures gorged, of the deadly close
Of the impi's horns, and the thundering shields.

Strange old man—like a lonely hawk
In a leafless forest that falls to the axe,
You linger on; and you love to talk,
Yet your tongue full often a listener lacks.
Truth and fiction, like chaff and grain,
You mix together; and often I try
To sift the one from the other, and gain
The fact from its shell of garrulous lie.

You were young when Chaka, the scourge of man,
Swept over the land like the Angel of Death;
You marched in the rear, when the veteran van
Mowed down the armies—reapers of wrath!
You sat on the ground in the crescent, and laid
Your shield down flat when Dingaan spake loud—
His vitals pierced by the murderer's blade—
To his warriors fierce, in dread anguish bowed.

And now to this: to cringe for a shilling,
To skulk round the mission-house, hungry and lone;
To carry food to the women tilling
The fields of maize! For ever have flown
The days of the spear that the rust has eaten,
The days of the ploughshare suit you not;
Time hath no gift that your life can sweeten,
A living death is your piteous lot.

W. C. Scully.

THE CATTLE THIEF.

I RISE from my bed
When the moon is dead,
And hidden is every star;
When the white man sleeps,
And the tired hound
No vigil keeps,
But, in slumber sound,
Follows the chase afar.

I swiftly glide
Down the dark hillside,
And creep to the farmer's kraal,
Where the sleek-limbed kine,
With breath so sweet,
That will soon be mine,
In my bush retreat,
Wake at my soft, low call.

We quickly pass
O'er the dew-wet grass,
For my whistle they tamely follow;
Over hill and dale
We hurry apace,
For the morning pale
Will bring the chase
On our track down the bushy hollow.

No rest we know,
For we hurrying go
To our forest sanctuary,
Through thickets dense
Where the bush-buck lies,
Beneath krantzes whence
The leopard's eyes
Look down for his morning quarry.

My home is far,
And the morning star
Rose twice on our hither track;
Where the wide Bashee
From Baziya's side
Rolls toward the sea,
My kinsmen bide,
And they watch for my coming back.

For I wooed a maid,
But her father said,
Ere his daughter I might marry,
Five heifers fair,
And oxen five,
I must homeward bear;
So for love I strive,
For I could no longer tarry.

Of all the maids
That hoe in our glades,
Noniese is the trimmest one;
She's lithe as a snake,

As a partridge brown;
And I crouch in the brake
Ere the sun goes down,
Till she pass when her work is done.

In three days more,
To her father's door—
If I 'scape the keen pursuit—
I'll come with the spoil,
And I'll tell my dear
Of the danger and toil,
And she'll tremblingly hear,
Whilst her eyes shine comfort mute.

W. C. Scully.

NAMAQUALAND.

A LAND of deathful sleep, where fitful dreams
  Of hurrying spring scarce wake swift fading flowers;
A land of fleckless sky, and sheer-shed beams
  Of sun and stars through day's and dark's slow hours,
A land where sand has choked once fluent streams—
  Where grassless plains lie girt by granite towers
That fright the swift and heaven-nurtured teams
  Of winds that bear afar the sea-gleaned showers.
The wild Atlantic, fretted by the breath
  Of fiery gales o'er leagues of desert sped,
Rolls back, and wreaks in surf its thunderous wrath
  On rocks that down the wan, wide shore are spread;
The waves for ever roar a song of death,
  The shore they roar to is for ever dead.

W. C. Scully.

THE SUMMER-HOUSE.

I BUILT my love a resting bower
Within a glade where forest trees
Stretched o'er the sward their budding boughs,
That chafed and mingled in the breeze.

And wild wood flowers, strange and bright,
Devised in nature's mystic mood,
Around the arbour trellis twined,
And quaintly draped the sombre wood.

Rich butterflies in ceaseless dance
Threaded the blossom-bordered gloom,
And singing bees in summer-time
Rifled each honey-laden bloom.

From here we'd see the timid dawn
Glance shyly from the eastern sky;
Or, in the west, the cloud-built pyre
Flame with the morrow's prophecy.

And oft we'd sit in sultry noons,
When throbbing nature sank to sleep,
And read the lore in love-lit eyes,
Of secrets rare that lovers keep.

Strange living things that underground
In secret places keep their home,
And fangless serpents, void of hurt,
Would to her gentle presence come.

She faded, but I saw it not—
How could I, when the love-plumed wings
That sped the swift hours dimmed my eyes,
And closed my ears to passing things?

I knew her love was fadeless—knew
That mine could die not, nor could deem
That love was life's alone, and life
A dream, and love an inner dream.

She faded, and it seemed her life
Passed to the blossom-burthened sprays;
The orchid seemed instinct with sense,
The lily tried to breathe and gaze.

She died when summer's failing light
Slid into autumn's golden gloom,
And when my hopes like faded leaves
Sank dead, they laid her in the tomb.

And now, when springtime wakes the world,
I watch each slowly opening flower
That, from the silence where she dwells,
Comes with fresh tidings to her bower.

W. C. Scully.

SONG OF THE SEASONS.

What says the antelope,
Couched in the fern?
Winter is cold,
When will springtime return?
Moist wind from the sea, set the fountains all flowing,
Hie hitherward, Spring, set the wild flowers blowing.

What says the snake,
As he creeps from the shadow?
Summer bides far,
Spring is cold in the meadow.
Sun, climb aloft, slanted beams quicken slowly;
Sheer shed, they warm both the high and the lowly.

What says the lory,
Hoarse from the spray?
Autumn brings fruit,
It is summer alway.
Droop, flowers vain, for your mission is ended,
To bear the seed babes was your beauty intended.

What says the world?
Winter's my rest;
After a revel
Slumber is best.
Sigh, sad south wind, o'er the wild ocean faring,
From ice fields afar your white frost burthen bearing.

W. C. Scully.

SLEEP'S THRESHOLD.

What gauzy shapes of shadow wind
Across the soul's husht meadow-plain,
In forms that fade and glow again,
When sleep first dawns upon the mind.

Like light-limbed antelopes, that skim
Across the wide and waste Karoo,
In changing combinations new
Their mingling masses hover dim.

They float and flit in wizard ways,
Above, below, and in, and out,
A reckless-ranging, lissom rout,
That takes no heed of roads nor days.

They are not thralls of space nor time,
These dwellers on the skirts of death;
They tread not earth, they breathe not breath,
Their homes are not of earthly clime.

Their tresses float on airless breeze,
Their raiment hath not woof nor warp,
Their music as a soundless harp
No sense may soothe nor ear appease.

The shadows, they of undreamt dreams,
The wraiths of buried hopes and fears,
The vapour fumed from fallen tears,
The masks of what is not, yet seems.

Like moths and butterflies they rise
From secret cells of waking thought,
And see strange light and come to naught,
And vanish swiftly, dewdrop-wise.

And no man knoweth where they keep
Their revels strange in waking hours;
They fleet like summer-smitten flowers,
When eyelids feel the kiss of sleep.

W. C. Scully.

SONG.

A RED rose hung on a green rose-tree,
And the summer winds were blowing;
It grew where a streamlet babbled free,
'Tween mossy rocks swift flowing.

A humble bee sought the rose's heart,
While the summer winds were blowing;
And the red rose petals he rent apart
For the pollen, yellow glowing.

A preying bird seized the hapless bee,
While the summer winds were blowing;
And upon a spine of a thorny tree
Hung him high, in the sunlight showing.

A hawk swooped out of the sunlit sky,
While the summer winds were blowing,
And bore the bird to the eyrie high,
Where its hungry young were cawing.

W. C. Scully.

SONNET.

I LEANT my breast against the golden gate
That bars the body from the land of dreams,
But lets the soul to roam in lawns where wait
Or wander down the banks of shining streams
The dead and living, holding strange debate
Of things that yet should happen 'neath the beams
Of suns as yet unrisen, whilst listless Fate
Paused, and the stars unyoked their tired teams.

And as my hand the latch sought, for I fain
Had followed one who wore a white rose-wreath,
Sleep touched mine eyes with darkness, and the pain
Of longing ceased; and when I next drew breath
I heard a voice low whisper, "It is vain
To enter here—thou first must drink of death!"

W. C. Scully.

GOOD AND EVIL.

Methought I saw an angel on the sun
Sit thronéd, whilst around the planets swayed,
Each with its guiding spirit, that obeyed
In duteous wise that lofty-visaged one;
But on this earth it seemed two spirits fought
A deadly combat, struggling hand to hand—
The Good and Evil, over sea and land
Locked in a strife with dreadful issues fraught.
For as the calm-eyed ruler of each sphere
Bore slowly past the battle-riven world,
Firm in his mighty hand he held a spear
Poised o'er his head, and ready to be hurled—
To dash this globe to fragments as it whirled,
Should evil's brow the wreath of victory wear.

W. C. Scully.

TWO GRAVES.

(DR. LIVINGSTONE'S AND HIS WIFE'S.)

I.

THE one lies low beneath a tropic sun,
Where huge Zambesi—spent and tired of rage,
And silent after roarings, and the leap
From heights, the wonder of the world,—slow glides,
And presses ocean backward in his strength.
It holds the dust of what was once a woman,
A woman who from distant Scotland came
To help her hero-husband to maintain,—
As errant knight of God, in foremost rank,—
The peaceful war of love, and truth, and light.
Against the hordes of darkness, hate and death,
She came; and three short months had scarcely gone
When fiery fever held her in his grip;
Then death came, and from ruined body drew
The faithful soul, and rendered it to God.
No woman's hand was there to flicker cool,
And drop its balmful touches on her brow;
No thought of piteous comfort might she take,
That in some holy spot amongst the tombs
That held her kindred's ashes, hers would be
A shrine for love's devotion to adorn.
Alas! she knew that he whose hot tears fell
Upon her dying face, ay, even he,
Her husband, might not linger by her grave,
But, by the trumpet tones of duty called,
Must hasten onward, even to his death.

II.

Within the lofty fane where sacred dust
Of heroes, saints, and singers lie in state,
His bones are laid. He died upon his knees,
Alone, and far from sympathy of man,
His head upon his buckler Bible laid;
Weary and spent, he answered to the call
When God said to his servant, "Come and rest."
And faithful hands then bore his body far
O'er swamp and desert-sand unto the sea;
And Heaven's winds swift wafted it across
The sea-fields to the far sea-girdled isle
Whose son he was; and Britain, with one voice
Of reverent mourning, voted him her first
And highest honour, and with sad acclaim
Bestowed a seat in the high pantheon
Of famed Westminster.

III.

Though their dust apart
Is separated by the Lybian waste
That stretches from the Mountains of the Moon
To where old Atlas stands and tells the sky
The secrets of the desert and the lore
Of his wild daughter Ocean; tho' the curve
Of the great world's strong shoulder swells between;
Yet sure they are together.

W. C. Scully.

THE FUNERAL OF LIVINGSTONE.

List ! there is music sounding !
Not airy strains, that lead the mazy dance;
Not trumpet tones that stir the warrior's soul;
But soft, and slow, and solemn, as it swells
And rolls afar and dies, midst its own echoes
From vaulted roof, and lofty aisle dim-lighted,
Where clustering columns rise, and rainbow rays
Gleam in their varied glory o'er the scene.
'Tis in the sacred fane where sleeps the dust
Of those whom Britain loves to honour, who
Shed living honour by their deeds on her,
Challenging place upon the rolls of fame.
Sages, and saints, and sons of song lie there;
Wresters of nature's secrets; senators,
Whose thund'rous eloquence could awe the world;
Patriots whose life-blood for their country flowed;
War chiefs who led her armies on to glory;
Statesmen with eye far-reaching, who could thread
Diplomacy's dark mazes, and the helm
With firm hand grasping, steer the nation's bark
Through storms of strife to honour and to peace.
And royalty's proud dust lies mouldering there,
'Neath sculptured marbles, or midst gilded shrines:
While high o'erhead the ancient banners droop.—
Monarchs of other days—of other ages,
Successive generations of the great,
Who ruled the realm of England as she grew
From isolate obscurity to greatness
That with a fame undying fills the world.

Lo! there—an open grave! and heads are bare,
And bent; and bosoms heave, and tears are falling
From youthful womanhood,—from hoary age.
Men weep, as slowly through the reverent throng
Is borne what hides from view a shrivelled form,
Wasted and featureless: yet round that bier
Stand silently the great of many lands.
Britain's high born stand there; and kings of men
Of other realms stand there by envoy. There
The sons of science gather, and the friends
Of light and liberty. The Churches' messengers
Look on in sadness there; and a vast throng,
Crowding around, sigh forth a nation's sympathy.
Tokens of reverent love—azalea wreaths,
Laurel and myrtle, with fair flowers entwined,
Bright immortelles, branches of Afric's palm—
(Symbol of triumph e'en in death) are there,
And, honour to the honoured!—Britain's Queen
Sign of "respect and admiration" sends,—
Her own, and royal daughter's funeral gifts
To deck the bier.

And who is it that thus
Draws to himself in death the eyes of nations?
Is it some warrior leader, who has died
In the proud hour of victory, and, wept
By a whole people's tears, lies down to rest?
—Or is it one who, in a nation's peril,
Has earned a nation's gratitude by wise
And warning counsels in her council halls?
—Is it a Prince has died? That royalty
Should sigh her grief, and nobles weep around?

'Tis LIVINGSTONE!—That name a thousand tongues,
Through years of hope and fear alternate, uttered;
While he who bore it, deep in Afric's wilds,
Solving her mystery of ages, trod
Her deserts, traced her streams—a pioneer
Of science, commerce, liberty, and mercy.
—A "weaver boy" thus honoured!—Wherefore not?
He wore, indeed, no ducal coronet;
Nor dwelt in lordly hall. But "stamp" of "rank"
He needed not, while nature's "gold" of manhood,
Solid, and pure, and bright, shone through his soul.

Rev. H. H. Dugmore.

ENGLAND.

O ENGLAND, speck amidst the world of waters!
Thou art the world's great wonder. Realms afar
Have heard thy voice, have seen thy light, have felt thy power.
Some, jealous, envy thee; some bless thy name.
The might of freedom, and the light of truth,—
The freedom that can burst the spirit's bonds,
The light that leads that spirit up to heaven,—
These are thy charge, and for the wide world's weal,
Be faithful to thy trust, thou honour'd Isle!
Thou hast a glorious mission to the nations.
Hold fast to the truth of God with strong right hand;
Cast forth the traitors that would take thy crown.
Still send thy sons, as Mercy's angels, forth
To sound in silver tones, to far-off lands,
The trumpet of the everlasting gospel;
So shall Heaven's smile be thy perpetual light,
And Heaven's dread power, "a wall of fire," thy guard.

Rev. H. H. Dugmore.

A SUNRISE THOUGHT AT "COVE ROCK," NEAR EAST LONDON.

KING of the Golden Orient! Lo! He comes
And mounts, magnificent, his burning throne;
Smiling in glory o'er the world of waters,
Whose joyous waves leap welcome to his coming.
See how the streaming rays, his almoners,
Fling forth his largesses in flashing brilliants,
Which the waves catch, and toss from crest to crest
In dancing rapture! 'Tis a glorious sight
To see a king right welcome to his subjects;
To hear the voice of Gladness universal
Greeting his royal smile. Not sea alone,
But ocean, earth, and sky join look and voice
In smile and song. See there in the far west,
Where little cloudlets cluster, as they hang
In modest diffidence upon the outskirts
Of the vast audience-throng! they, too, are flushing
Bright with the universal joy; and, hark!
Breezes are striking their Æolian harps
Among the woofs that wave along the hills;
While the deep voices of the surge, far pealing,
Thunder their ceaseless anthem to his praise.
Brief, as befitting, is the monarch's audience;
For who may look upon the King of light
With eye unblenching? Now in massy folds,
The darkening curtains of his cloud pavilion
Gather around him; and tho' dazzling still

Their broad gold fringes wave, the weak eye rests
From his transpiercing glance of unveiled glory.
Hail! glorious image of the King of Kings!
Seen or unseen, thou givest light, and life,
And joy, and beauty to revolving worlds
That circle round thy throne. Centre of Power!
Thy mystery of might upholds, sustains,
And governs as the Delegate of God,
Their measur'd harmony of ceaseless motion;
Reining their fleetness with an arm of strength
Felt and obeyed in the far depths of space,
Where roll remotest planets round their spheres
In twilight solitude unseen, unknown.

Rev. H. H. Dugmore.

THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY A LITTLE SHELL AT COVE ROCK.

Delicate, fragile, tiny shell,
Thou hast a wondrous tale to tell.
I find thee here on the ocean strand;
The billows have borne thee safe to land.
Yet those billows have proved the proud ship's grave,
And have mocked the power of man to save,
As its shattered fragments, far and wide,
Were strewn on the shore by the surging tide.
But thou art here, and all unharmed!
Say, how hast thou its fury charmed,
That its mighty waves, on their foaming breast,
Should bear thee safe to a place of rest?

The rock rears high his haughty form,
And challenges proud the ocean storm;
And he tosses the wild waves raging back,
As his challenge provokes their fierce attack.
But again, and again, and again they come,
And vainly the rock resists its doom;
The waves are mighty, and know their might.
"Never have we been vanquished in fight!
We kiss the sands of the yielding shore,
We rend the rock in his pride of power:
Be it soon, be it late, thy fate is sealed;
Be it soon, be it late, thou shalt surely yield!"
And it yields at last: with a headlong leap
It buries its shame in the foaming deep.

And the waves toss high their plumy spray,
As they dance triumphant around their prey.

And yet, little shell, I find thee here,
And nothing hath wrought thee harm or fear;
Though shattered rocks, and a rock-strewn shore,
Give tokens dire of the ocean's power.
Tell me, tiny, beautiful thing!
Filmy and frail as the butterfly's wing—
An infant's finger could crush thee to dust—
What hast thou then wherein to trust?
And whence thy courage and power to brave
The surging might of the wild sea wave?
"I have not braved the ocean's might;
I reared no front with the waves to fight.
I yielded me meek to the billow's force,
As it swept me along in its onward course.
My weakness was strength in the tempest's hour,
And my safety I found in the ocean's power."

Rev. H. H. Dugmore.

PAST AND PRESENT.

Over the waters wild and deep,
Where the storm-waves roll, and the storm-winds sweep—
Over the waters see them come!
Breasting the billow's curling foam,
Fathers for children seeking a home—
In Afric's Southern Wilds.

Wilderness lands of brake and glen,
The wolf's and the panther's gloomy den;
Wilderness plains where the springbok bounds,
And the lion's voice from the hills resounds;
And the vulture circles in airy rounds—
Are Afric's Southern Wilds.

"Hand to the labour! heart and hand!
Our sons shall inherit an altered land.
Harvests shall wave o'er the virgin soil,
Cottages stand, and gardens smile,
And the songs of our children the hours beguile—
'Mid Afric's Southern Wilds.

"Make we the pride of the forest yield;
Wrest from the wilderness field on field;
And to brighten our hope, and lighten our care,
And gain the aid of our Father there,
Raise we to heaven the voice of prayer—
From Afric's Southern Wilds."

. . . . . .

The locust clouds have darkened heaven,
The "rusted" fields to the flame are given;
The war-cry is echoing wild and loud,
For the war of the savage, fierce and proud,
Has burst like the storm from the thunder-cloud—
On Afric's Southern Wilds.

"Never despair, though the harvests fail;
Though the hosts of a savage foe assail;
Never despair, we shall conquer yet,
And the toils of our earlier years forget.
In hope's bright glory our sun shall set—
'Midst Afric's Southern Wilds."

. . . . . .

Our toil-worn fathers are sinking to rest,
But their children inherit their hope's bequest.
Valleys are smiling in harvest pride;
There are fleecy flocks on the mountain side;
Cities are rising to stud the plains;
The life-blood of commerce is coursing the veins
Of a new-born Empire, that grows and reigns—
Over Afric's Southern Wilds.

Rev. H. H. Dugmore.

THE OCEAN—STORM AND CALM.

I LOOK upon the ocean. Far away,
A fleet of thunder-clouds is sailing by.
High in mid heaven the ærial canvas swells,
And proudly scorns the breeze's proffered aid;
Instinct with its own spirit's breath of life,
That bears it onward in its majesty;
While ever and anon the signal flash
From van, and rear, and centre, tells of might
Resistless, stern, and slow, and dark, and grand:
Its shadows sweep o'er ocean's heaving billows;
While avant-couriers, on the lightning's wing,
Herald its coming to the distant realms
Beyond the horizon's verge.

. . . . . .

'Tis sunset on the ocean! Let us gaze:
A Sabbath sunset; and all things combine
To give it peace and beauty; for the winds
Have folded their broad pinions, and have sunk
To peaceful slumber on the ocean's breast—
The sportive waves, that tossed their spray erewhile,
Displume their crests in reverence for the hour,
And all is calm around.

The curtain cloud
That hung o'er all the west throws wide its folds,
And in the clear blue ether far away
Bright islands of the blest seem floating, free
From the rough cares that fret this lower world,
And radiant in a glory all divine.

Rev. H. H. Dugmore.

AT KALK BAY.

Asleep! now dreams the curly head
Of all the treasures I outspread
Upon the shore—queer ocean things:
Blue men-of-war, all strings and stings;
An octopus; two prickly green
And swollen fish, aburst with spleen.

To bring them home, thine only care;
Of odour fearsome, nursemaid's glare,
Oblivious. Sobbing in thy sleep!
I, the stern father, come to peep,
Kiss thee, and place this new-bought toy
There—in the bucket—morning's joy!

When life's night cometh will the store
That I have gathered strew the shore?
Is what we rescue from the wave
So priceless—worth our while to save?
Does he whose bucket on the sand
Is emptied by the Father's hand

Lose aught? Kindly is God's contempt
For man's upgatherings. If exempt
From heritage of failing powers,
No richer than in heavenly bowers,
A day of healthful toil they gain,
Not what the bucket may contain.

Rev. A. Vine Hall.

THOMAS PRINGLE.

(POET AND REFORMER.)

With glory of poetic light
The century dawned whose night
Is deepening around us. Joyful rang
The earth when all those morning stars together sang.

Our Ocean-Mother gave to us
One, not least luminous,—
Pringle, the poet of the parched Karoo.
From thraldom of the "glittering eye" his music drew

Coleridge, who loved its magic well;
E'en Scott beneath it fell,
Forgetful of the Gael and Saxon feud
While listening to that weird romance of solitude.

A fighter thou, with never time
To build the deathless rhyme;
Thine the flung gauntlet of a righteous hate,
And thine a flower of song to lone ways consecrate.

Thou singest; we behold the band
Of exiles leave their land:
The fair dear hills of Scotland fade away
For ever! eyes unused to weeping weep that day.

But hallowed page, and David's lyre,
And thine their hearts inspire.
And now they tread the hot and barren shore;
And now, by floods bereft of all their humble store,

Thy pen it is that wins relief.
But soon they lose their chief—
The conquest of the desert has begun,
And a far fiercer fight must by his blade be won:

The battle of the Press. Full sore
The rain of blows he bore!
Fainting with wounds he quits the well-fought field,
But not before the shout telling the foemen yield.

And yet again with gleaming brand,
One of a hero-band,
The world beholds him: on Oppression's grave
His hand doth plant the flag that frees the trembling slave.

Hard seems the fate that once again
Forbids the knight to drain
The cup, to feast and grace the board with song,—
Death beckons him: he glides from that illustrious throng.

Then Calumny, once timorous-tame,
Grew bold and, crawling, came,
With the vile brood that haunts her loathsome cave;
They gibber round and spill their venom on his grave.

"Therefore his life was failure!" say
Those who but count the pay.
Fools even thus: from the world's poor renown
God ever saveth some for His own hand to crown.

Pringle, we love thy hate of wrong,
Thy simple, heart-felt song!
A knightly soul, unbought, and unafraid;
This country oweth much to thy two-edged blade:

And when the crowds of meanly great
And sordidly elate
Are dust long since forgotten, Afric's page
Will boast thy name as now—a light from age to age.

Rev. A. Vine Hall.

THE SPIRIT OF THE SUMMIT.

"*That path no bird of prey knoweth, neither hath the falcon's eye seen it.*"—JOB.

WHERE the desperate grass to the precipice clings,
Where the smoke of the torrent will moisten thy wings,
Past the caves in the crags where the Hurricanes hide,
Daring Adventurer, fearlessly ride.

Onward and upward defying the clouds,
Eluding the lean hands they stretch from their shrouds,
Joyously pass on thy pinions of might,
Seeking the golden pavilions of Light.

Is it love so emboldens—the limitless blue
To voyage, companionless, eager to woo
The Goddess of Fire from her home in the sun,
Heedless of where the round Earth may have spun?

Vainly I dream it! Thou never canst rise
Half of the distance that Fantasy flies,
Glancing not back till from planets afar
Earth glimmers faintly, a vanishing star!

Plumage of gold in the westering glow;
Thoughts upon rapine and slaughter below;
Of thy blood-sprinkled eyrie bethink thee and fly,
Ere Darkness shall chase thee in rage from the sky.

Poor Spirit, alas! that my spirit should be
In strength and in feebleness kindred to thee!
Now rising exultant on pinions of fire,
Now falling and falling, down, down to the mire.

Yea, pity thou *me*, for not thine the keen pain
Of wings that to reach to the Ultimate, strain:
Thou, happy to sail over mountainous dust;
I, to the Uttermost, longing to thrust

Through showering stars, like adventurous prow
Of some boat of the Ancients, until on the brow
Of ocean there gleam the gold circlet of sand,
And the keel rushes up on Creation's last strand.

Oh! why am I tortured while watching thy course?
Why the fierce longing? and why the remorse?
Ah! why the remorse? O'er the purple ravine
I see thee ascending by pathways unseen,

Nor feel a reproach for not striving to scale
By footholds of sapphire: then why that I fail
To advance by the more inaccessible way
Of sun-sprinkled Space to the Gates of the Day?

O Desire! art thou prophet or friend? Wherefore
stand
Solemnly pointing with eloquent hand
Mortals (whose feet are on burial sod!)
Up to the Infinite, up to a God?

A prophet I hail thee, and tremblingly cry—
"May we grasp a great Destiny—scaling the sky!"
What is remorse for the failure to-day
But the Voice of Omnipotence saying "Ye may!"

Rev. A. Vine Hall.

TWO DECEMBERS.

Now o'er the Homeland dear,
Winter hurls a glittering spear,
While all the furies of the Arctic night,
Following his icy car's impetuous flight,
Scream in demoniac mirth,
As down the blast
They stream, aghast
Stands the fair Earth:

In vain the bowing woods a trembling homage pay;
Groaning, they see their bright wealth whirled away;
He flies o'er the streams, they stiffen!—fields, and lo!
Fear petrifies the clods. But hearth-fires glow;
And through long evenings, round the blaze,
Happy children raise
Merry defiance of the blustering king
Whose pæans frenzied winds and deep-voiced surges
sing.

Sweet is December 'neath the southern sun:—
The morning music of the wak'ning glade;
The fiery Noon and pine-woods' purple shade;
The timid twilight beautiful but fleet;
The star-eyed balmy night whose gentle feet
Disturb no dreaming flower, so light they pass,
Nor shake one diamond from the dewy grass.

Sweet is December 'neath the Southern sun,
The cloudless blue!

Yet envy not our brighter skies
(Ye who from the ancient Home
May not roam),
Soon smitten through
By shafts of glory, *our* world fainting lies,
Craving the storm ye fain would shun,
While yours, baptised with power,
Renews her strength and beauty: blessed dower
After brief trial hour!
And when the blossomed hawthorns throw
On emerald grass their showers of fragrant snow;
When lark, and thrush, and blackbird sing
All the splendour of the Spring,
All the miracle of the living,
And the nightingale's thanksgiving
Carries through the moonlit night
Every note of day's delight,
In so intense an ecstasy,
Such a rain
Of rapture as to mortal brain
Must needs appear akin to pain——
England! if *now* from every shore
Thy sons return in thought once more
To hear the Christmas-bells waken thy woodlands hoar,
What *then* shall be
Their passionate desire for thee—
To kiss thy daisy-sandalled feet,
And their undying love for thee and thine repeat!

Rev. A. Vine Hall.

CORONATION ODE.

(EDWARD VII. AND ALEXANDRA. 1902.)

FREEMEN, we bring our Sovereign lord a homage proud and free,
And place upon his brow to-day the Crown of Liberty.

For us, no helpless crouching down beneath a tyrant's power;
Nor passing choice of mob-formed breath, the passions of the hour.

We take our Kings by God's own choice, the sacred law of birth;
But we have also taught our Kings the sacred law of worth.

The Sceptre from Victoria's hands comes weighted with the gold
Of honour and unselfish grace, of duty manifold.

Not for himself our King ascends the steps of Britain's throne.
The people's suffrage with him goes; the glory is our own.

Our story of a thousand years, though oft with fault and flaw,
Reveals a royal progress still of liberty and law, —

Shows 'mid the ruins, smoking yet, of things that once have been,
Above the crash of Kings and States, a Sovereignty serene,

Which, like the Queen we hail to-day with many a jubilant chime,
Retains its beauty unimpaired despite the lapse of time.

Who thinks, upon the nuptial morn, that love and bliss may fail?
There is the hope, there is the joy, there is the bridal veil.

This is an Empire's Wedding-day: its fair ideal shines,
And of its hopes and purposes a fadeless garland twines.

Not ours to hide, in garish light, the shadows round the Throne,—
War's consequence, the orphan's cry, mothers and widows' moan,—

Religious discord, social strife, and racial discontent,—
The murmur of the toiling crowds, beneath their burdens bent.

These to the Empire's heart appeal, nor to the crown belong;
There is a meaning in the words, "the King can do no wrong."

The Sovereign Power unshaken stands, like truth o'er
passing dreams,
And, lit with glory from on high, above the shadow
gleams,—

Gleams as th' eternal starlight gleams over earth's
cloudy floor,—
Crowns as the steadfast rainbow crowns the cataract's
varying roar.

Therefore our hundred million souls join heart, and
mind, and voice,
Therefore, all strife and discord hushed, one triumph
we rejoice:

And through the Empire's earth-wide bounds, joy's
emblems we display,
The King and Queen of all our realms are throned and
crowned to-day.

F. C. Kolbe.

TABLE MOUNTAIN.

Great Table Mountain, which I daily scan
With still increasing joy, this morn was framed
In a low rainbow Phœbus rightly aimed
Just to include the outline in its span.
And surely never since the world began
Was Nature's ruggedness more sweetly tamed.
Yet through my heart a sudden terror flamed;
Heaven's smile more dread inspires than earthly ban.
Such is the alchemy of sun and rain:
Touching earth's choicest dream of loveliness,
It turned life's daily pleasure into awe.
And, pray, what meant it? Nay, I cannot guess:
But all that is within me,—soul, heart, brain,—
Was dumbly glorified by what I saw.

F. C. Kolbe.

THE SPIRIT OF HIDDEN PLACES.[1]

Over the mountain's shoulder, round the unweathered cape,
In lands beyond the sky-line, there hides a nameless shape,—
Whether of fiend or goddess no mortal well may know;
But when she speaks—with flushing cheeks, they one by one must go.

To men in far old cities, scanning the curious chart,
Her voice would sound at midnight, like music in the heart;
Across the wrinkled parchment a glory seemed to fall,
And pageants pass like shapes in glass along the pictured wall.

She led the sails of Lisbon beyond the Afric shore,
Winning a world of wonders by seas unknown before.
She watched the sturdy captains of Holland's India fleet
Planting their post on that grim coast where the two oceans meet.

Yea, and in earlier ages, what ghostly race were they
Who left the eastward waters to tread the inland way?

[1] For permission to include these selections from Mr. Fallaw's poems, the Editor is indebted to Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Ltd., the owners of the copyright.

Who bore the gold of Ophir and built the tower of stone—
But left no sign save empty mine, and rampart overthrown.

But others find their footsteps, and strike the trail anew.
How fared the burghers onward across the wild Karoo!
And still, with hand at bridle and eyes that search the wind,
With strain and stress the white men press that mocking sprite to find.

We seek her by the valley,—she moves upon the height;
The rainbow stands athwart us to blind her from our sight;
Along the sea-bound bastion her steps are hid in spray,
And though we dream,—with morning gleam the lustre dies away.

Yet sometimes for a moment men think to feel her nigh:
When first the lost Moon Mountain unveils to Stanley's eye;
Or when the Great White Wanderer beheld Zambesi leap
With earthquake-stroke and sounding smoke down the stupendous steep.

And then again we lose her, for lack of wizard skill,
Only the message liveth that tells us, *Further still!*
Yet could we come upon her, and seize, and hold her fast,
The onward track would something lack of its old magic past.

No secret on the ridges, no whisper in the air,
No sense of paths untrodden, no shadow anywhere;
Earth robbed of half her glamour, and ocean void of awe—
The proud pursuit that brings not fruit is man's eternal law

Lance Fallaw.

DAY AND NIGHT UP-COUNTRY.

O'er the unshaded veldt
The ruthless sun
Pauses, as though he felt
His course half run.

The noontide world stands still
And gasps for air;
Lifts every breathless hill
A forehead bare.

Along the quivering ground
The heat-haze hangs,
Casting a mirage round
The aloe fangs.

Down by the dam, knee deep,
A brooding band,
Like statues seen in sleep
The cattle stand.

And stretched beside them lies
Their Kaffir herd,
Watching with narrowed eyes
The weaver bird.

In the hot glare, how near
The distance seems!
The league-long hills show clear
Through all our dreams.

Hills in whose giant tower
  Soft darkness hides,
And whence at evening's hour
  Her shadow glides.

Blest moment! quickly come—
  Thy breeze we know,
Waking the lips grown dumb,
  The pulses slow.

Come with thy starry sky,
  A boundless deep;
Under thy quiet eye
  We would not sleep,

But watch the lonely land
  Her breast unfold,
When night's grey colours stand
  Athwart the gold;

See the long mountains bend,
  And take new shape;
Strange shadows to descend,
  And mists to drape.

Till morning's lighter air
  Blows up from far,—
Day, thou art wondrous fair
  By sun or star!

Lance Fallaw.

OLD ST. THOMAS' CHURCHYARD, DURBAN.

No English willow for our English dead:
The soft flamboyant shades their southern sleep.
On the spare grass syringa blooms are shed,
And lithe virginias creep
Over the stones where the swift lizards tread.
The rose is here, but with a faint perfume;
And, standing 'thwart the hedge, the kaffir-boom
Holds in mid-air its tufts of poppy red.

Worship has gone, but Peace has never left
The church deserted, with the toppling tower
And the dead creeper—Time can make no theft
Of her unpassing hour,
For Time in this retreat seems wing-bereft.
The world is all apart—far, far away
The eyes scarce catch the shapes of Bluff and Bay,
Where tree and gable leave an opening cleft.

Slowly the great gate opens, as 'twere loth
To yield its sombre pathways to our tread.
Slowly we saunter, reading thro' thick growth
The records of the dead.
The spirit of the place demands an oath
Of silence, and of endless quietness.
Yet many here on whom the lilies press
Had little time for reverie or sloth.

Far off at times they seem—and yet how near
Those days of simpler manners, sterner life,
The settler-days of hatchet, gun, and spear,
Of hardship and of strife.
Labour and action try the pioneer,
But not the heart-ache easier dreamers know;
Else had he never built and founded so,
Nor we, who follow, traced his footsteps here.

Strange temple! where the savage horde of old
Reared their round huts, and cleared their tilling-place:
Now thou hast rest and slumber to enfold
Those of another race.
Does peace come never till the pulse be cold?
Here, surely, could the living find her too.
Yet must we win her; there is much to do,
And this land's charter still but half unrolled.

Lo! evening falls; far over Mariannhill
The sunset hangs, and the rich after-glow
Sets the dark woods on fire; the air is still,
The grey bats come and go;
A thousand insects chirp in chorus shrill,
The firefly wanders with her elfin light,
And the young moon grows on the speedy night
That gathers round us ere we leave the hill.

Lance Fallaw.

SIMON VAN DER STEL.

Southward ever the Dutchman steered,
Southward with right good will;
No more the sea-worn sailor feared
The Cape of Table Hill.
No longer frowned the savage land
With famine fierce and fell,
For bounteous were the heart and hand
Of Simon van der Stel.

Not as the rest, for greed of spoil,
He ruled by Table Bay;
In new-built barn and seeded soil,
His little kingdom lay.
Cornfield and garden, oak and vine,
He loved and tended well.
"Who plants a tree is friend of mine,"
Quoth Simon van der Stel.

All in a pleasant vale was laid
The dorp that bears his name,
With bough of fruit and leaf of shade,
To bless the founder's aim.
Here oft he sat in simple state,
A kindly tale to tell;
And children kept the birthday fête
Of Simon van der Stel.

Yet not beside the guarded Cape
His narrowed fancy dwelt;
Not only in the golden grape
Was all the flame he felt.
He knew the thought that feeds and fills,
The ceaseless northward spell;
Three hundred miles to the Copper Hills
Rode Simon van der Stel.

The exiles of the frugal French
A southern refuge sought;
He bade them prove, by hedge and trench,
The skill their fathers taught.
He watched his race of sturdy boers,
He saw their numbers swell;
"Send wives for lusty bachelors,"
Wrote Simon van der Stel.

Full thirty years her quiet charm
The Cape-land o'er him cast,
Till at Constantia's favoured farm
He turned to rest at last.
The builders from the *Haarlem* wreck
Dug deep and founded well;
But chief of all their work to deck
Was Simon van der Stel.

True statesman of that elder day,
The Dutchman's praise be thine!
Nor lesser claim need Britons lay
To kinship of thy line.

Two races at our councils sit,
One nation yet to dwell;
And both are heirs, by worth and wit,
Of Simon van der Stel.

Lance Fallaw.

A CAPE HOMESTEAD.

Just that glimpse of the Table Rock
Seems the key to the breathless spell.
Never, you'd say, could the wild wind shock
A single leaf from the oaks of Stel.
Four white gables, with scroll and bend,
Lettered and dated, nobly wide;
Red roof, and the shutters, end to end,
Flung back at the lattice side.

Sleep for ever seems nestling there,
All uncounted the hours go by.
Silent sits in his deep old chair,
That white-haired man, with the dreaming eye.
Does he think, as the shadows fall,
And the swift bats skim in the evening glow,
Of the haunting voices that used to call
Through the doorways long ago?

Think of the days when the young folks made
Mirth and music beneath that roof,
Danced at night in the moon's soft shade,
And rode and hunted by kop and kloof?
Yes, and the time when the boys would trek,
When the Cape cart stood by the open door,
Till they watched it rounding the far-off nek . . .
And another came back no more.

Oh, white nest, but thy birds are far;
East and northward the strong sons go;
One where the lone Nyanzas are,
One where the shoals of the Orange flow.
One is treading the world's wide path
In crowded cities beyond the seas;
And one found rest, in the hour of wrath,
On a warrior's couch of ease.

Bid them come back again—those that can,
Lead them hither o'er berg and veldt.
Comely woman and proper man,
Let them kneel where of old they knelt.
Would they not in a moment take
Step and voice from the years long fled?
Just as soon might the dead one wake
From his wild Shangani bed!

Yet he waiteth, the grey old sire,
On the pillared stoep, by the creeping vines.
The low sun wraps him with rosy fire,
And the thin gum-shadows are drawn like lines.
The Kaffir, driving the great-horned herds,
Passes, crooning a quiet tune;
And the mountains mutter, too low for words,
"We shall comfort him very soon."

Lance Fallaw.

THE EMIGRANT'S FAREWELL.

"Our native land—our native vale—
A long and last adieu!
Farewell to bonny Teviotdale,
And Scotland's mountains blue!

"Farewell, ye hills of glorious deeds,
And streams renowned in song;
Farewell, ye blithesome braes and meads
Our hearts have loved so long.

"Farewell, ye broomy elfin knowes,
Where thyme and harebells grow!
Farewell, ye hoary haunted howes,
O'erhung with birk and sloe.

"The battle-mound, the Border-tower,
That Scotia's annals tell;
The martyr's grave, the lover's bower—
To each—to all—farewell!

"Home of our hearts! our father's home!
Land of the brave and free!
The sail is flapping on the foam
That bears us far from thee!

"We seek a wild and distant shore,
Beyond the Atlantic main;
We leave thee to return no more,
Nor view thy cliffs again.

"But may dishonour blight our fame,
And quench our household fires,
When we, or ours, forget thy name,
Green Island of our Sires.

"Our native land—our native vale—
A long, a last adieu!
Farewell to bonny Teviotdale,
And Scotland's mountains blue!"

Thomas Pringle.

AFAR IN THE DESERT.

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side:
When the sorrows of life the soul o'ercast,
And, sick of the Present, I cling to the Past;
When the eye is suffused with regretful tears,
From the fond recollections of former years;
And shadows of things that have long since fled,
Flit over the brain, like the ghosts of the dead:
Bright visions of glory—that vanished too soon;
Day-dreams—that departed ere manhood's noon;
Attachments—by fate or by falsehood reft;
Companions of early days—lost or left;
And my native land—whose magical name
Thrills to the heart like electric flame;
The home of my childhood; the haunts of my prime;
All the passions and scenes of that rapturous time,
When the feelings were young and the world was new,
Like the fresh flowers of Eden unfolding to view;
All—all now forsaken—forgotten—foregone!
And I, a lone exile remembered by none,
My high aims abandoned, my good acts undone,
Aweary of all that is under the sun,
With that sadness of heart which no stranger may scan,
I fly to the desert, afar from man.

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side;

When the wild turmoil of this wearisome life,
With its scenes of oppression, corruption, and strife,
The proud man's frown, and the base man's fear,
The scorner's laugh, and the sufferer's tear,
And malice, and meanness, and falsehood, and folly,
Dispose me to musing and dark melancholy;
When my bosom is full, and my thoughts are high,
And my soul is sick with the bondsman's sigh—
Oh! then there is freedom, and joy, and pride,
Afar in the desert alone to ride!
There is rapture to vault on the champing steed,
And to bound away with the eagle's speed,
With the death-fraught firelock in my hand—
The only law in the desert land.

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side;
Away, away from the dwellings of men,
By the wild deer's haunt, by the buffalo's glen;
By valleys remote where the oribi plays,
Where the gnu, the gazelle, and the hartebeeste graze;
And the kudu and eland unhunted recline
By the skirts of grey forests o'erhung with wild vine;
Where the elephant browses at peace in his wood,
And the river-horse gambols unscared in the flood;
And the mighty rhinoceros wallows at will,
In the fen where the wild ass is drinking his fill.

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side;
O'er the brown Karoo, where the bleating cry
Of the springbok's fawn sounds plaintively;
And the timorous quagga's shrill whistling neigh

Is heard by the fountain by twilight grey;
Where the zebra wantonly tosses his mane,
With wild hoof scouring the desolate plain;
And the fleet-footed ostrich over the waste,
Speeds like a horseman who travels in haste,
Hieing away to the home of her rest,
Where she and her mate have scooped their nest,
Far hid from the pitiless plunderer's view
In the pathless depths of the parched Karoo.

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side;
Away, away, in the wilderness vast,
Where the white man's foot hath never passed;
And the quivered Coránna or Bechuán
Hath rarely crossed with his roving clan;
A region of emptiness, howling and drear,
Which man hath abandoned from famine and fear;
Which the snake and the lizard inhabit alone,
With the twilight bat from the yawning stone;
Where grass, nor herb, nor shrub takes root,
Save poisonous thorns that pierce the foot;
And the bitter-melon, for food and drink,
Is the pilgrim's fare, by the salt lake's brink;
A region of drought, where no river glides,
Nor rippling brook with osiered sides;
Where sedgy pool, nor bubbling fount,
Nor tree, nor cloud, nor misty mount,
Appears to refresh the aching eye;
But the barren earth and the burning sky,
And the blank horizion, round and round,
Spreads, void of living sight and sound.
And here, while the night-winds round me sigh,

And the stars burn bright in the midnight sky,
As I sit apart by the desert stone,
Like Elijah at Horeb's cave alone,
"A still small voice" comes through the wild
(Like a father consoling a fretful child),
Which banishes bitterness, wrath, and fear—
Saying, "MAN IS DISTANT, BUT GOD IS NEAR!"

Thomas Pringle.

THE CAFFER.

Lo ! where he crouches by the Kloof's dark side,
Eyeing the farmer's lowing herds afar;
Impatient watching till the evening star
Leads forth the twilight dim, that he may glide
Like panther to the prey. With freeborn pride
He scorns the herdsman, nor regards the scar
Of recent wound, but burnishes for war
His assegai and targe of buffalo hide.
He is a robber? True; it is a strife
Between the black-skinned bandit and the white.
A savage? Yes; though loth to aim at life,
Evil for evil fierce he doth requite.
A heathen? Teach him, then, thy better creed,
Christian ! if thou deserv'st that name indeed.

Thomas Pringle.

THE CORÁNNA.[1]

FAST by his wild resounding river
The listless Coran lingers ever;
Still drives his heifers forth to feed,
Soothed by the Gorrah's humming reed;
A rover still unchecked will range,
As humour calls, or seasons change;
His tent of mats and leathern gear,
All packed upon the patient steer.
'Mid all his wanderings hating toil,
He never tills the stubborn soil;
But on the milky dams relies,
And what spontaneous earth supplies.
Should some long parching droughts prevail,
And milk, and bulbs, and locusts fail,
He lays him down to sleep away,
In languid trance the weary day;
Oft as he feels gaunt hunger's stound,
Still tightening famine's girdle round;
Lulled by the sound of the Gareep,[2]
Beneath the willows murmuring deep;
Till thunder-clouds surcharged with rain,
Pour verdure o'er the panting plain;
And call the famished dreamer from his trance,
To feast on milk and game, and wake the moonlight dance.

Thomas Pringle.

[1] An inland tribe mentioned by Livingstone and other African travellers. [2] The Orange River.

THE BUSHMAN.

Let the proud white man boast his flocks,
And fields of foodful grain;
My home is 'mid the mountain rocks,
The desert my domain.
I plant no herbs nor pleasant fruits,
I toil not for my cheer;
The desert yields me juicy roots,
And herds of bounding deer.

The countless springboks are my flock,
Spread o'er the unbounded plain;
The buffalo bendeth to my yoke,
The wild horse to my rein;
My yoke is the quivering assegai,
My rein the tough bow string;
My bridle curb a slender barb—
Yet it quells the forest king.

The crested adder honoureth me,
And yields at my command
His poison-bag, like the honey-bee,
When I seize him on the sand.
Yea, even the wasting locust-swarm,
Which mighty nations dread,
To me nor terror brings, nor harm—
For I make of them my bread.

Thus I am Lord of the desert Land,
And I will not leave my bounds,
To crouch beneath the Christian's hand,
And kennel with his hounds:
To be a hound and watch the flocks,
For the cruel white man's gain—
No! the brown serpent of the rocks
His den doth yet retain;
And none who there his stings provoke
Shall find his poison vain.

Thomas Pringle.

THE INCANTATION.

HALF-WAY up Indoda[1] climbing,
Hangs the wizard forest old,
From whose shade is heard the chiming
Of a streamlet clear and cold:
With a mournful sound it gushes
From its cavern in the steep;
Then at once its wailing hushes
In a lakelet dark and deep.

Standing by the dark-blue water,
Robed in panther's speckled hide,
Who is she? Jaluhsa's daughter,
Bold Makanna's widowed bride.
Stern she stands, her left hand clasping
By the arm her wondering child;
He, her shaggy mantle grasping,
Gazes up with aspect wild.

Thrice in the soft fount of nursing
With sharp steel she pierced a vein,—
Thrice the white oppressor cursing,
While the blood gushed forth amain,—
Wide upon the dark-blue water,
Sprinkling thrice the crimson tide,—
Spoke Jaluhsa's high-souled daughter,
Bold Makanna's widowed bride.

[1] The Man Mountain, so named by natives by reason of its supposed resemblance to the human figure.

"Thus unto the Demon's River
Blood instead of milk I fling:
Hear, Uhlanga—great Life-giver!
Hear, Toguh—Avenging King!
Thus the mother's feelings tender
In my breast I stifle now:
Thus I summon you to render
Vengeance for the Widow's vow!

"Who shall be the Chief's avenger?
Who the Champion of the Land?
Boy! the pale Son of the Stranger
Is devoted to *thy* hand.
He who wields the bolt of thunder
Witnesses thy Mother's vow!
He who rends the rocks asunder
To the task shall train thee now!

"When thy arm grows strong for battle,
Thou shalt sound Makanna's cry,
Till ten thousand shields shall rattle
To war-club and assegai:
Then, when like hail-storm in harvest
On the foe sweeps thy career,
Shall Uhlanga, whom thou servest,
Make them stubble to thy spear!"

Thomas Pringle.

MAKANNA'S GATHERING.

WAKE! Amakosa,[1] wake!
And arm yourselves for war,
As coming winds the forest shake,
I hear a sound from far:
It is not thunder in the sky,
Nor lion's roar upon the hill,
But the voice of Him who sits on high,
And bids me speak His will!

He bids me call you forth,
Bold sons of Kahabee,
To sweep the white men from the earth,
And drive them to the sea:
The sea which heaved them up at first,
For Amakosa's curse and bane,
Howls for the progeny she nurst,
To swallow them again.

Hark! 'tis Uhlanga's voice
From Debe's mountain caves!
He calls you now to make your choice—
To conquer or be slaves:
To meet proud Amanglezi's guns,
And fight like warriors nobly born:
Or, like Umlao's feeble sons,[2]
Become the freeman's scorn.

[1] A warlike Kaffir tribe.
[2] Kaffir name of contempt for Hottentots.

Then come ye chieftains bold,
With war plumes waving high;
Come, every warrior, young and old,
With club and assegai.
Remember how the spoiler's host
Did through our land like locusts range!
Your herds, your wives, your comrades lost—
Remember—and revenge!

Fling your broad shields away—
Bootless against such foes;
But hand to hand we'll fight to-day,
And with their bayonets close.
Grasp each man short his stabbing spear—
And, when to battle's edge we come,
Rush on their ranks in full career,
And to their hearts strike home!

Wake! Amakosa, wake!
And muster for the war:
The wizard-wolves from Keisi's brake,
The vultures from afar,
Are gathering at Uhlanga's call,
And follow fast our westward way—
For well they know, ere evening-fall,
They shall have glorious prey!

Thomas Pringle.

EVENING RAMBLES.

The sultry summer-noon is past;
And mellow evening comes at last,
With a low and languid breeze
Fanning the mimosa trees,
That cluster o'er the yellow vale,
And oft perfume the panting gale
With fragrance faint: it seems to tell
Of primrose tufts in Scottish dell,
Peeping forth in tender spring
When the blithe lark begins to sing.

But soon, amidst our Libyan vale,
Such soothing recollections fail;
Soon we raise the eye to range
O'er prospects wild, grotesque, and strange:
Sterile mountains, rough and steep,
That bound abrupt the valley deep,
Heaving to the clear blue sky
Their ribs of granite, bare and dry,
And ridges by the torrents worn,
Thinly streaked with scraggy thorn,
Which fringes nature's savage dress,
Yet scarce relieves her nakedness.

But where the vale winds deep below
The landscape hath a warmer glow:
There the spekboom spreads its bowers
Of light green leaves and lilac flowers;

And the aloe rears her crimson crest,
Like stately queen for gala drest;
And the bright-blossomed Bean-tree shakes
Its coral tufts above the brakes,
Brilliant as the glancing plumes,
Of sugar birds among its blooms,
With the deep green verdure bending
In the stream of light descending.

And now along the grassy meads,
Where the skipping reebok feeds,
Let me through the mazes rove
Of the light acacia grove;
Now while yet the honey-bee
Hums around the blossomed tree;
And the turtles softly chide,
Wooingly, on every side;
And the clucking pheasant calls
To his mate at intervals;
And the duiker at my tread
Suddenly lifts his startled head,
Then dives affrighted in the brake,
Like wild duck in the reedy lake.

My wonted seat receives me now—
This cliff with myrtle-tufted brow,
Towering high o'er grove and stream,
As if to greet the parting gleam.
With shattered rocks besprinkled o'er,
Behind ascends the mountain hoar,
Whose crest o'erhangs the Bushman's cave
(His fortress once and now his grave),

Where the grim satyr-faced baboon
Sits gibbering on the rising moon,
Or chides with hoarse and angry cry
The herdsman as he wanders by.

Spread out below in sun and shade,
The shaggy glen lies full displayed—
Its sheltered nooks, its sylvan bowers,
Its meadows flushed with purple flowers;
And through it like a dragon spread,
I trace the river's tortuous bed.
Lo! there the Chaldee-willow weeps
Drooping o'er the headlong steeps,
Where the torrent in his wrath
Hath rifted him a rugged path,
Like fissure cleft by earthquake's shock,
Through mead and jungle, mound and rock.
But the swollen water's wasteful sway,
Like tyrant's rage hath passed away,
And left the ravage of its course
Memorial of its frantic force.—
Now o'er its shrunk and slimy bed
Rank weeds and withered wrack are spread,
With the faint rill just oozing through,
And vanishing again from view;
Save where the guana's glassy pool
Holds to some cliff its mirror cool,
Girt by the palmite's leafy screen,
Or graceful rock-ash, tall and green,
Whose slender sprays above the flood
Suspend the loxia's callow brood
In cradle-nests, with porch below,
Secure from winged or creeping foe—

Weasel or hawk or writhing snake;
Light swinging, as the breezes wake,
Like the ripe fruit we like to see
Upon the rich pomegranate tree.

But lo! the sun's descending car
Sinks o'er Mount Dunion's peaks afar;
And now along the dusky vale
The homeward herds and flocks I hail,
Returning from their pastures dry
Amid the stony uplands high.
First, the brown Herder with his flock
Comes winding round my hermit-rock:
His mien and gait and gesture tell,
No shepherd he from Scottish fell;
For crook the guardian gun he bears,
For plaid the sheepskin mantle wears;
Sauntering languidly along;
Nor flute has he, nor merry song,
Nor book, nor tale, nor rustic lay,
To cheer him through his listless day.
His look is dull, his soul is dark;
He feels not Hope's electric spark;
But, born the white man's servile thrall,
Knows that he cannot lower fall.
Next the stout Neat-herd passes by,
With bolder step and blither eye;
Humming low his tuneless song,
Or whistling to the horned throng.
From the destroying foeman fled,—
He serves the colonist for bread:
Yet this poor heathen Bechuan
Bears on his brow the port of man;

A naked, homeless exile he—
But not debased by slavery.

Now, wizard-like, slow Twilight sails
With soundless wing adown the vales,
Waving with his shadowy rod
The owl and bat to come abroad,
With things that hate the garish sun,
To frolic now the day is done.
Now along the meadows damp
The enamoured firefly lights his lamp.
Link-boy he of woodland green
To light fair Avon's Elfin Queen;
Here, I ween, more wont to shine
To light the thievish porcupine,
Plundering my melon-bed,—
Or villain lynx, whose stealthy tread
Rouses not the wakeful hound
As he creeps the folds around.

But lo! the night-bird's boding scream
Breaks abrupt my twilight dream;
And warns me it is time to haste
My homeward walk across the waste,
Lest my rash step provoke the wrath
Of adder coiled upon the path,
Or tempt the lion from the wood,
That soon will prowl athirst for blood,—
Thus, murmuring my thoughtful strain,
I seek our wattled cot again.

Thomas Pringle.

GOOD HOPE.

"Good Hope" for this good land yet,
If we would but dare and do;
If we would but stand with ready hand
To grasp ere the blessings go.

"Good Hope" for this good land yet,
If we would but stay life-streams,
Which will past us flow while we, too slow,
Stand rapt on the bank in dreams.

"Good Hope" for this good land yet,
If we would but cease to hope
That the rain will drop and bring a crop
While we idly sit and mope.

"Good Hope" for this good land yet,
If we work, e'en while we wait
For the sun and rain to ripen grain
We have sown, then left to fate.

"Good Hope" for this good land yet,
If we use each heav'n-sent gift
As a means to an end, and do not spend
Our best without care and thrift.

"Good Hope" for this good land yet,
If we live and struggle still
To a better life, through toil and strife,
With a stout heart and strong will.

"Good Hope" for this good land yet,
If our faith be active trust,
And not blind belief, which, at each grief,
Still mourns that what must be must.

"Good Hope" for this good land yet,
If we would but trust in God,
And the Christ who came and took our name
To bless, not to turn the sod.

William Rodger Thomson.

THE POET.

The poet walks entranced o'er earth,
And, dreaming, touches Nature's strings,
And calls grand harmonies to birth;
Men listen wond'ring as he sings.
He goeth oft to wild retreats,
Where Nature broods in solitude;
There, in the Muses' haunted seats,
Enrapt he stands—as if he view'd
Strange visions on the face of heav'n.
His eye rolls o'er the boundless blue,
And then, as if his sight had giv'n
Wings to his soul, he soareth through
Th' empyrean vault, and upward flies
To scan deep mysteries, unseen
By common souls, whose earth-bound eyes
Are blinded with the dazzling sheen
Of glorious light, tow'rds which he soars.
Or, stretch'd upon the lap of earth,
When Spring breathes o'er the myriad pores
Which pierce the soil, and giveth birth
To Nature's buried loveliness—
To flowers and leaves, and all things fair;
When the bright sun looks down to bless
His fruitful bride; when throbbing air,
Warm with the sunshine, dances bright
O'er hill and dale, o'er land and wave;
When birds, long dumb through Winter's night,
Returning, hail the dawn, which gave

Life to the earth, to them new voice—
Then, too, the poet's soul renews
Her slumb'ring might; all things rejoice,
And flow'rs of thought bud as he views.

William Rodger Thomson.

CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

THERE is a land unknown to fame,
A land whose heroes have no name
In the grey records of past age;
Unchronicled in hist'ry's page,
Untamed by art, yet wild and free.
That land lies in the southern sea,
It laughs to heav'n which smiles on it;
There midway in wild waters set,
With suns serene and balmier breeze
Than ever swept these northern seas,
Its beetling crags rise vast, and war
With oceans, meeting from afar,
To break their billows on its shore
With fearful, never-ending roar.

Bold mariners who sailed of old
Through unknown seas in search of gold,
Saw those dark rocks, those giant forms,
And, fear-quelled, named them "Cape of Storms!"
O land of storms, I pine to hear
That music which made others fear;
I long to see thy storm-fiend scowl,
I long to hear the fierce winds howl,
Hot with fell fires across thy plains.

Thou glorious land! where Nature reigns
Supreme in awful loveliness.

O shall thy exiled son not bless
Those hills and dales of thine, where first
He roamed a careless child; where burst
Thy tropic splendour on his eye;
Where days were spent, whose mem'ries lie
Deep 'neath all afterthought and care,
Yet rise more buoyant than the air,
And float o'er all his days? O home
Of beauty rare, where I did roam
In childhood's golden days, my prayer
For thee soars through this northern air.

Land of "Good Hope," thy future lies
Bright 'fore my vision as thy skies!
O Africa! long lost in night,
Upon the horizon gleams the light
Of breaking dawn. Thy star of fame
Shall rise and brightly gleam; thy name
Shall blaze on hist'ry's later page;
Thy birth-time is the last great age;
Thy name has been slave of the world;
But when thy banner is unfurled,
Triumphant Liberty shall wave
That standard o'er foul slav'ry's grave,
And earth, decaying earth, shall see
Her proudest, fairest child in thee!

William Rodger Thomson.

TO A SISTER.

Fanny, Fanny, dost remember
Days long gone, when we were young?
Dost remember how we sported,
How we laughed and how we sung?
Then we never dreamt of parting,
But each joyous, careless day
Fled; and no thought of to-morrow
Cross'd the sunshine of our way.
Dost remember that old garden,
'Twas so beautiful and fair,
With its wealth of tropic splendour,
With its balmy, perfum'd air?
Dost remember the dark alleys,
Arch'd with many rarest vines,
With their clusters hanging thickly
In long, many-coloured lines?
Dost remember that green arbour,
With its cool, refreshing shade,
With the passion-flowers shining
In the shadows which they made?
Dost remember the great willows
Weeping o'er their weight of years,
Dipping in the pond beneath them,
And then drying up their tears
As they trailed their snake-like branches
O'er the dried and withered grass,
With their heavy, woeful weeping,
Bringing life where they did pass?

Dost remember how we gather'd
  Orange-blossoms 'neath the trees,
As they fell, like scented snowflakes,
  In the balmy summer breeze?
Dost remember all those flow'r-beds
  With their wild, wild finery,
Nought but colour, colour, colour,
  Laughing 'neath the bright blue sky?

William Rodger Thomson.

AMAKEYA.

This ballad is founded on the following incident, which happened at the close of one of the Kaffir wars: Macomo, with all his people, was removed to the neighbourhood of Algoa Bay. He used every means to remain on his old location. His appeal was pathetic enough, but we have profited somewhat by our experience of the word of a Kaffir. "Here," said he, stretching his hand over the beautiful territory, "my father, a great chief, dwelt; these pastures were crowded with cattle; here I have lived to grow old; here my children have been born; let me die in peace where I have so long lived." These entreaties, however, could not be listened to for one moment, and as a last trial his daughter, Amakeya, the beauty of Kaffirland, made her way to the tent of Colonel Campbell, 91st Regiment, who, totally unprepared for her appearance, was yet more astonished at the sacrifice she offered if her father's sentence of banishment might be rescinded. She made her strange offer in all the consciousness and pride of beauty; and, with her finely-moulded arms folded before her, she spoke without hesitation, for she was guided by motives worthy a lofty cause. "If her father might remain on his own lands," she said, "she would be the sacrifice and guarantee for his future good faith towards the white man. She would leave her own people and follow Colonel Campbell, his home should be hers; she would forsake all and dwell with him. This was her last word, her final decision, and she would abide by it." Amakeya's motives were not unappreciated by her hearer, but the proposal was of course rejected, with every consideration for her position and the circumstances by which she had been actuated, and she departed with her father on his journey.—Mrs. H. Ward, *The Cape and the Kaffirs.*

Far in the Kaffir's glorious land,
Beside a burning heap
Of ruins, sits an aged man,
Who bitterly doth weep.

Through his clasp'd hands the tears fall fast,
And wet the earth, where stood
His humble home, in ashes laid,
Red with his kindred's blood.

And curses, struggling with his grief,
Die on his quiv'ring lips;
And tight he grasps the assegai,
Which still with life-blood drips.

Then, starting to his feet, he cast
An impious look on high:
"God of the whites," he cries, "who dwell'st
Beyond yon azure sky,

"Thy children are a cruel race
Of murderers and thieves.
Give back to me my warriors brave,
Fall'n thick as autumn leaves

"Before the hot blast of their guns,
Which, with its hailstorm, rode
O'er all our ranks, and made us fall
Like corn when it is mow'd.

"They say Thou art a God of peace—
Thy rebel children lie;
They say Thou art a righteous judge:
For vengeance dread I cry!

"Avenge the wrongs we've suffered
For those who call on Thee;
If Thou art just, then root out those
Who live by treachery!"

The godless savage paused awhile—
And, with a flashing eye,
Look'd round o'er all that beauteous land,
Far stretching 'neath the sky.

Where'er he turn'd his eyes he saw
War's desolating brand;
The smoke of burning villages
Arose on ev'ry hand.

The tow'ring mountains far away,
High heav'nward bore the blaze;
O'er all the fruitful valleys hung
A thick and lurid haze.

"There are the mountains where I track'd
The lions to their dens;
Oft have I coursed the flying deer
Across those burning glens.

"No more shall huntsman's shout be heard
On Mancazana's hills;
No more shall huntsman slake his thirst
In Mancazana's rills;

"No more shall young men dance at eve,
Around the peaceful kraal;
No more shall maidens wait to hear
Their brave young lovers call.

"No more shall children sport around
The reed huts of their sires;
Men, wives, and children—all are burn'd
Under the white man's fires!"

The old man paused, a choking sob
Burst from his heart of steel.
Ah! white men, do ye ever think
The black man too can feel

Those large emotions of the heart
Which home and kindred wake,
Which swell up in our panting breasts
As if our hearts would break?

While still he wept, a lovely maid
Crept from a wood hard by;
Poor Amakeya's skin was black,
But Love beamed from her eye

As brightly as it beameth forth
In lordly homes of ease,
In happier climes, where sound of war
Ne'er scared off love-born Peace.

She stole close to the sobbing chief,
And look'd up in his face
With all a woman's tenderness—
Eve's universal grace.

"My father, O my father! list,
Ah! weep not so, I pray;
But come with me, I'll comfort thee,
And all thy grief allay."

She took him gently by the hand,
And led him from that soil
Mark'd with the blood of those he loved
And all war's horrid toil.

And silently he follow'd her
Far up the mountain-brow;
Far from the white man's glitt'ring tents,
Down in the vale below.

At last they reach'd a tow'ring rock,
Which cast its cooling shade
Far down the rugged mountain's steep,
And there her pace she stay'd.

"Come, father, sit and rest thee now
From the fierce heat of strife;
I'll bring thee corn and milk to stay
The fainting spring of life."

She hurried to a neighb'ring cave
And brought thence milk and corn,
And, kneeling at his feet, she fed
The warrior war-worn.

The father look'd down on his child,
And smiled to see her care;
Long time he spoke not, silently
He stroked her shining hair.

"Sweet Amakeya! I am rich
Since thou art left to me—
The white man's Queen's not half so rich
As I, when I have thee.

"To-morrow, child, we'll leave this land,
Where thou wert born and bred;
To-morrow we must seek a home
Unknown to white man's tread.

"To-morrow's setting sun must find
Us resting far from here;
We can no more at eventide
Let fall the tribute tear

"Upon the mound where rests the dust
Of her who you me gave;
Ah! when we're gone, the white man's plough
Will tear your mother's grave!"

"My father, say not so," she cried;
"The white man may be moved;
To-morrow let us go to him—
My pow'r 's not yet been proved.

"Perchance he'll listen to my tale,
Perchance I'll move his heart,
Perchance he may call back the word
Which made us hence depart."

"My daughter, hope not thus; 'tis vain;
The white man's stern command
Cannot be changed; we must go hence,
And leave our fatherland!

"My arms are gone! I must obey;
No safety more is here;
Too long we've fought! the strife is vain
Where victory's so dear!"

"My father, talk no more of war;
I know the white man's pow'r;
Love moves all hearts, let love be then
Our refuge in this hour.

"In this dark hour of deep despair,
Of sorrow and distress,
Love yet may conquer when the hands
Of war hang weaponless.

"To-morrow when the sun is up,
When day has dawn'd again,
When night has lull'd the passions wild
Which war could not restrain,

"We'll get us to the white chief's tent;
My tears will move his heart;
O say not nay! one trial more,
And then we can depart."

The father gave his slow consent
Unto her earnest pray'r;
When woman prays, a savage e'en
Must yield to words so fair.

When scarce the morrow's sun had risen,
The chieftain and his child
Went down unto the white men's tents;
He sad, she hopeful, smiled.

They pass'd through crowds of gaping men,
Who glared upon their foe
With sullen brow or scornful eye,
And pitied not his woe.

They came before the white chief's tent;
He met them at the door,
And gazed in wonder at the maid,
Such graceful form she bore.

"O white man!" spake the Kaffir chief,
"We know that thou art brave;
And brave men have not hearts of steel,
But save when they can save.

"We come to crave one boon from thee:
Reverse thy stern command;
O bid us not depart from here;
This is our Fatherland!

"We love it, as the white man loves
His home beyond the sea;
Thou would'st not let a stranger take
That dear-loved land from thee.

"We'll live in peace, and do thy will;
We'll call thy Queen our Queen;
O let us die where we were born,
And let this waving green,

"Which waves above our fathers' dust,
Once wave above our head;
When white man's herds shall crop the grass
Where Kaffir cattle fed."

The white man's brow grew stern, he spake—
"No mercy shall be given
To black men who can break their oaths,
And fear no God in heav'n.

"Ten years ago you ask'd for peace;
The white man gave you peace;
He gave back lands he took from you;
From bonds he gave release.

"How have you kept your faith with him?
Where now the oaths you swore?
Dost think the white man now will deal
As kindly as before?

"Nay! you and yours have steeled his heart,
And driven pity thence;
Nay, savage foe! your wiles I know;
Depart! and get you hence.

"Upon the borders of the sea,
Your thieving band may roam,
And find some other pleasant land—
This is no more your home."

The savage chieftain heaved a sigh,
Then, turning to his child,
He laid his hand upon her head,
And said in accents mild,

"Poor Amakeya! dost thou hear?
In vain, in vain, we crave;
We have no home! come, let us go
And seek some unknown grave!"

But proudly stepp'd the maiden forth,
And conscious of her charms,
She folded o'er her swelling breast
Her beauteous ebon arms.

And in sad accents, soft and clear,
And sobbing while she spake;
She pray'd so earnestly, then wept,
As if her heart would break.

"O white man! pity those grey hairs
Which grace my father's head;
He'll fight no more, let him die here;
Ah! soon he must be dead!

"O grant my prayer, and gratefully
I'll yield myself to thee;
I'll go with thee where thou dost go,
E'en o'er the fearful sea.

"I'll be thy slave, and toil alway,
And never long to come
Unto this lovely land again:
This land which is my home.

"But willingly I'll give up all!
And leave my father's side,
And leave my tribe, and leave my land,
And all thy will abide.

"Let him but live to hunt the deer
On Mancazana's hills;
Let him but live to quench his thirst
In Mancazana's rills."

Amazed, the father heard such speech:
"My daughter, speak not so;
What! dost thou think thy father then
Would ever let thee go,

"And suffer slavery and shame,
That he might dwell in peace?
Thou'rt mad, my child; come, come, we'll go—
This idle praying cease."

He fell upon her neck and wept,
And pressed her to his heart:
"My peerless Amakeya! come—
We'll never, never part."

The white man's haughty look relaxed,
A tear roll'd down his face,
And, wond'ringly, he gazed upon
That form of matchless grace.

And then—with mien as if he spoke
To dame of high degree—
He bow'd before that savage girl,
And answered soothingly:

"Thou noble creature! God has made
Thee beautiful and fair;
And given thee a soul as pure
As e'er breathed Christian pray'r.

"But go,—I dare not hear thee speak,
I dare not hear thee pray;
It grieves my heart, my noble maid,
But—I must answer "nay":

"The stern command I gave, does come
From higher pow'r than mine;
But go in peace, thy words have smoothed
Thy father's lot and thine."

Then mournfully the maiden look'd
Upon her aged sire,
Still weeping on her breast, as if
In tears he would expire.

"Come, father! far away we'll go!
I'll ever comfort thee;
We'll leave our home, and seek our graves
Far by the great blue sea!"

They left the white man's glitt'ring tents
And climb'd the mountain brow;
The father filled with sad despair,
The maiden hopeless now.

. . . . .

Few weeks have pass'd; the Kaffir girl
Has left her native land,
And travell'd far o'er hill and dale,
And now sits by the strand.

She gazes on that mighty sea
She ne'er had seen before;
Half-pleased, half-awed, she hears the waves
Hoarse-moaning on the shore.

She loves to see the stately waves
Come rolling to the land,
And dash their foam-crests on the rocks,
And murmur o'er the sand.

She speaks no word, she moves no limb,
But sits as in a trance,
And ever looks out to the sea
With that same wond'ring glance.

. . . . .

Long years have pass'd—the Kaffir girl
  Still loves to come at eve,
And sit upon some beetling crag,
  And with the sad sea grieve.

Poor Amakeya! years shall pass,
  And white men still shall come
Across that sea, and still press on,
  And take thy new-found home!

But while one black man shall be found
  Where thousands now do rove,
Shall still the touching tale be told
  Of Amakeya's love.

William Rodger Thomson.

ZOURBERG MOUNTAINS.

HAIL! land of drifting cloud and wooded wold,
Thy fairy scenes seem conjured by the hand
Of wizard king. Thy hills majestic stand
Aloft with time-bronzed brows searéd and old,
And heavenward fling their nodding peaks on high:
The breezy zephyrs rush careering free;
The eagle waves his wing of liberty.
Here Nature reigns in grand sublimity;
Far through the southern haze Old Ocean gleams
Silvered with sunlight foam, and mournfully
Heaves his wild arms—with words inspired he seems,
Mutt'ring a prologue to Eternity.
God of my soul, on earth such scenes we find,
Guiding from them to Thee the human mind.

M. J. MacMahon.

THE LOST CHILD.

It was an eve when the wild wind
  Came moaning from the restless sea.
The sun sank low, and left behind
  Darkness, and the wind minstrelsy
Of Ocean chafing the rugged shore
'Mid storm and spray and hoarse waves' roar.

The brave, proud barque, which ere the noon
  On pearly wings sculled scatheless on,
Had met the squall's fierce rage, and soon
  Her pride, her loveliness were gone.
On rock, on beach, on foaming tide
Her timbers were scattered far and wide.

The hearts that throbbed with life's glad bound
  Are silent now, save one, a child;
Whom when the passing fisher found,
  He oped his little hand and smiled,
And lo! in the tiny palm there lay
A gold cross, moist with salt sea-spray.

How true that men are pilgrims all
  Upon this world's wild, restless sea.
The mast'ring Passions' sudden squall
  Shatters the soul: secure is he
Who grasps the Cross, and through the strife
Thus grasping, ever findeth life.

M. J. MacMahon.

A HOME BY THE SHORE.

O FOR a home on the sandy shore,
Where the green waves sing for evermore;
For the breezes free,
On the rolling sea,
Are like Æolian harps to me.

O for to list while the wild winds rave,
As they sweep along o'er the curling wave,
Where the sea-mews roam
O'er the snowy foam,
And swiftly skim to their briny home.

O for a sail with the sloping mast,
And to merrily fly before the blast,
When skimming along
The billows among,
That curling foam to the wild waves' song.

A. C. Fairlie.

SWEET FALLS THE EVE.

Sweet falls the eve in Chumie's Vale,
And blithe awakes the morn,
The flow'rets scent the early gale,
That rustles through the corn.

The moonbeam glances on the hills,
And silvers o'er the lawn;
While tuneful dance the gushing rills
To hail the golden dawn.

There Nature with her fairest dress
The lofty hills adorn;
The morning breeze the flowers caress,
And Plenty fills her horn.

No fairer maids in Afric's land
Than where the streamlets glide
Among the Chumie Mountains grand
To lone Kieskamma's tide.

A. C. Fairlie.

CHUMIE FAIR.

Oh! Chumie fair, my childhood's home,
While far from thee I now do roam,
Yet oft in fancy, oft in dreams
I wander by thy crystal streams.

Thy woodlands green, thy mountains grand
Rise as by touch of magic wand,—
Methinks I see thy waterfalls,
And hear thy wild dove's am'rous calls.

With fond remembrance do I cling
To where the sweet mimosas fling
Their rich perfume o'er hill and dale,
And scent the winds of summer gale.

Though other lands are fair to view,
And other skies are quite as blue,
Yet back to thee my soul doth roam,
O Chumie fair, my childhood's home.

A. C. Fairlie.

BUFFALO BANKS.

Buffalo banks are fair to view
In summer-time of year,
When flowers are wet with pearly dew
And birds sing loud and clear.

Buffalo banks, your mazy groves
Are filled with wild birds' song,
And oh! how pleasant 'tis to rove
Your waving woods among.

Meandering walks your depths adorn,
Through forest and through glade,
Where Cupid reigns and rules supreme,
And lovers' vows are paid.

Secluded in your winding groves—
Those groves by Nature made,
How sweet the golden hours would pass,
With Tylden's bonnie maid.

In leafy shade or flowery dell,
By Buffalo's flowing tide,
With thee for aye I fain would dwell,
Sweet lass of Tylden side.

A. C. Fairlie.

KEISKAMMA. [1]

WHERE the gorgeous aloes grow,
There the hidden sources flow,
Cold and pure as molten snow,
Of the sweet Keiskamma.

Where the halcyon builds her nest
Neath the fern-tree's nodding crest,
Kissed by breezes from the west,
Flows the sweet Keiskamma.

Where the Amatolas [2] stand,
Guardians grim of Kaffirland,
Gurgling o'er its silver sand,
Flows the bright Keiskamma.

Winding 'mid mimosa glens,
Rocky banks and reedy fens,
By the tigers' hidden dens,
Glides the pure Keiskamma.

Where the furious torrents dash
O'er the rocks with deafening crash,
Ever onward, wild and rash,
Rolls the bright Keiskamma.

[1] A river bordering Cape Colony and Kaffirland.
[2] Mountains where the Keiskamma rises.

Where the willow branches bend,
And to earth their shadows lend,
Here its crystal waters wend—
Beautiful Keiskamma.

Through long valleys soft and green,
'Neath a cloudless heaven serene,
Glittering in its silver sheen,
Flows the clear Keiskamma.

Where the rugged rocks protrude,
And disturb its placid mood,
'Neath the shadowy yellow-wood,
Breaks the pure Keiskamma.

Where the river-horses splash,
And the foaming breakers dash
'Gainst the rocks with mighty crash,
Sweeps the bright Keiskamma.

Here, though sinking fast away,
For its waters may not stay,
Lovely as throughout its way
Is the bright Keiskamma.

Then at last its journey o'er,
Where it seeks the wild sea-shore,
'Midst the mighty ocean's roar,
Dies the sweet Keiskamma.

George E. Bulger.

THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

(A PATRIOTIC SONG.)

LAND of serene and sunny skies,—
Land of the lion and fleet gazelle;
Land where the summer never dies,
Cape of Good Hope, we love thee well.

Land where the birds in gorgeous plume
Flit through the bush or their love-song tell;
Land where the flowers show Eden's bloom,
Cape of Good Hope, we love thee well.

Land where the hunter scours the plains,
Free as the bird o'er the ocean's swell;
Land of kind nature's soothing strains,
Cape of Good Hope, we love thee well.

Land where the grape and the orange grow
Deep in yon cool sequestered dell;
Land of the melon's luscious flow,
Cape of Good Hope, we love thee well.

Land where fields of golden grain,
Rich in their bounteous fruitage swell;
Land of sleek herds in lengthened train,
Cape of Good Hope, we love thee well.

Land of a stalwart yeoman race,—
Stern, but with hearts as true as a bell;
Homely, but full of kindly grace,
Cape of Good Hope, we love thee well.

Land of the dark Amakosa tall,
Seeking release from the savage spell;
Land where there's room and to spare for all,
Cape of Good Hope, we love thee well.

Land of Good Hope! our prayer we raise,—
May peace and plenty with thee dwell;
Filling our hearts with grateful praise,
For this bright land we love so well.

W. Selwyn.

SUNRISE.

Fresh from a plunge in the sequestered pool,
This bosky hollow holds as in a cup,
And freed from lingering languors of the night,
By the delicious chill of dim-lit depths,
I stand awhile upon its reedy brink,
And with an eager and awakened gaze
Watch how the cloudless morn like some fair flower
Unfolds its splendours.
Autumn's lagging sun
Still lingers to o'ertop the wooded slope
Behind me, leaving undisturbed awhile
The slumb'rous dusk of the beshadowed pool;
But half the bush-grown hill that mounts beyond
Is mellowed with a mantling garb of gold,
And o'er its rock-strewn summit's soaring ridge
Expands the sunlit azure, pale and pure.
A breath of primal freshness seems to stir
In the soft eddies of the morning air,
As if old Earth in some awaking dream
Had won again the gladness of her youth.
Borne from the bush, the wood-dove's crooning note
Hints of a hidden peace surpassing speech,
And the gay pipe and thrill of many a bird
Lends utterance to the joyance of the hour!

O, miracle of morning! ever new,
As on the first sweet dawn in Paradise;

O glad tranquillity, whose healing thrill
No other hour in weary hearts can wake!
Soft steals the golden sunlight down the slope,
As it would catch the dark pool unaware.
Bush after bush its glowing kiss receives,
And grey old thorn-trees grasp it eagerly
In their rough arms, as though its warm embrace
Might bring back verdure to each withered bough.
And now the leader of the shining herd
Sets a shy foot upon the crumbling bank,
And straight the leaden water is bespread
With a swift dawn and flush of wavering light
That weaves a smile across its sullen front,
Like Hope surprising some despairing soul.
Spread, sunshine! o'er the gladdened waters spread,
Until each lurking shadow is displaced;
And take as thanks the incense offering
Of slowly drifting vapour-wreaths that smoke
From its sun-smitten surface. Come at last
Where I that sing of thee stand, and through my frame
Strike a quick ecstasy of sensuous bliss.
Strike through the flesh and reach my inmost soul,
And slay its shadows with thy glorious light!
Pure from the pool, anointed by thy beams,
And soul-fed with sweet visions of the morn.
The better shall I live and work this day,
Feeling through hours of toil remembered thrills
Of sunlight kisses, soft and warm as love's.

Herbert Tucker.

A PRAYER FOR RAIN.

O come, reluctant rain!
For whose approach parched veld and failing spring,
And every living thing,
How long have looked in vain.

The farmer, day by day,
With darker brow watches his dying crops;
The burnt and barren slopes
Where his starved cattle stray.

The maiden in her bower
Wishes the pity-laden tears that spring
From her soft heart might bring
Help to each pining flower.

And Spring is in the land!
Ah, ruthless rain! canst thou unmoved behold
The bronzéd bud unfold
A pale, beseeching hand?

By inward power impelled,
Must the young leaf to loveliest life be born
Only to die forlorn,
Thy gracious drops withheld?

The snowy-blossomed pear
Scatters a mimic shower at every gust;
Wilt thou to dew her dust
Naught from thy treasures spare?

And shall yon willow, fain
At the stream's glass to deck her bending head,
Droop o'er its empty bed
Her budding boughs in vain?

The winds on circling wing
Through the wide heaven seek for thine hidden track:
Baffled they turn them back,
And dust is all they bring.

Or should the southern gale
From ocean's fields have filched a cloudy flock,
With barren mist they mock
The thirst of hill and vale.

Or if on fiery noons
Some thund'rous pile a tragic front uprears,
In a few blistering tears
Its brief-lived passion swoons.

Art thou forever fled
In wrath for gifts misspent by men of yore,
Heedless to catch and store,
Thy showers freely shed?

Nay then, too angry rain,
With pity for earth's blameless herbs be stirred:
For sake of beast and bird
Come back to us again!

Come back! and coming bring
No scanty dole meted with miser hand,
But to the beggared land
A bounteous largess fling.

And ah! what rose could yield
To my sick sense, surcharged with dust and heat,
A fragrance half as sweet
As smell of moistened field!

Rather mine ears had heard,
Waking, the swish of rain like surging seas
Sound through the swaying trees
Than blithest song of bird;

And fairer to mine eyes
Some frowning dawn, rain-drenched and tempest torn,
Than this soft azure morn
Breathing of Paradise!

Herbert Tucker.

A TWILIGHT POST.

Not in the noise and glare of day:
The clamour of the crowded way:
Comes any voice to me.
'Mid the harsh world's distracting hum
My heart is dull, my lips are dumb,
No dreams my soul may see.

But when afar from street and mart,
In eve's hushed hour I walk apart,
While in the paling west
The sunset fire's last smouldering brand
Sheds a faint lustre o'er the land,
To light it to its rest;

While in the zenith's deepening blue,
Some bold-eyed star has leapt to view,
First in the field of night;
Whose brightening beacon-flame inspires
A growing host of kindred fires
Soft stealing into sight;

When all the misty vale is still,
Save for the cricket's ceaseless trill,
The chorus of the vlei,
The watch-dog's bark, the low of kine,
And lesser sounds too faint and fine
For the coarse ear of day;

(O hallowed hour, unearthly fair!
O stainless deeps of purple air!
O silver stars on high,
Watching with all-compassionate gaze
Those who along earth's dusky ways
Wander alone, as I!)—

Then, floating down some starry beam,
A glorious thought, a golden dream,
Falls on my heart like dew;
And fancy's sun-besmitten flowers,
That languished through the noontide hours,
Lift their sweet heads anew!

And tones of earth's pathetic strain
Are wafted through my wakened brain;
And from the shadowy skies—
O hush! O hark! and thou shalt hear,
Echoed from shining sphere to sphere,
The Eternal Harmonies!

Herbert Tucker.

THE THREE KINGDOMS.

O MOONLIT land of Might-have-been!
Where long my 'trancéd feet have strayed,
Lured by rich vistas, vaguely seen
Through many a velvet-shadowed glade,

Of sheltered vales of virgin peace,
And dewy meadows of delight,
And flashing streams, and shimmering seas,
And summits soaring out of sight;

While wraith-like over hill and dell
A sighing wind for ever goes,
Whose music in its lull and swell
A note of witching sadness knows:

With steadfast will I turn my eyes
From all your silver mystery:
I list no more the breeze that sighs
Its sweet regret from tree to tree.

For there is poison in your breath,
And madness in your moaning breeze;
And hidden swamps invite to death,
And pale shapes lurk amid the trees:

And many a noble heart and brave,
Lured by your beauty's syren snare,
Has found a vain, inglorious grave,
Stricken by your miasmic air.

. . . . . .

The Kingdom of What-is is mine,
Though all too narrow seems its bound.
The honest day doth round me shine:
My feet are set on solid ground.

And so, disdainful of regret,
I yield my sword and give parole
Not to o'erpass the limits set
By conquering fate for my control.

My little round erect I tread,
Or bend my back in humble toil,
Striving to win my spirit's bread
From out the stern, unfruitful soil.

Yet gracious hours my Kingdom hath,
When Love's warm sunlight o'er it lies,
And Beauty's blossoms fringe my path,
And Joy sheds music from the skies.

And hush! at moments rare and high
Some opal gleam of morning dew,
The glory of some sunset sky,
With secret gladness thrills me through.

Some cloudland temple up the blue
Lifting its dome of dazzling white,
Some wild bird's call, some wild-flower's hue
Surprises me with strange delight—

With whispers of some hidden bliss
Which Nature's earlier children know,
And to the dwellers in What-is
By hint and symbol darkly show.

And like the breeze that heralds morn
  Hope through my heart anew doth sweep;
And to my quickened brain are borne
  Strains sweet as music heard in sleep;

. . . . .

And, rich with endless recompense
  For Life's poor, stinted gifts, I see
In vision through the veil of sense
  The mystic Kingdom of May-be !

Herbert Tucker.

THE FORGET-ME-NOT.

Drifting adown life's rapid stream,
And musing on man's lot,
Methought, upon the wave-worn bank,
Bloomed a Forget-me-not.
Quickly I drew me to the shore,
And culled the little flower.
Ah! ever in my mem'ry lives
The rapture of that hour.

But soon the sweet blue pass'd away,
Too swiftly fled my dream;
And now my bark drifts slowly on,
Down the dark, lonely stream.
Only above a soft light shines,
And whispers to my heart—
Place not thy love on aught below
From which thou soon must part.

Nor weep thou o'er thy faded flower;
It has but passed on high.
The tender blue thou deemest lost,
Beams on thee from the sky.
Then pray to Him, who reigns above,
That when this life is o'er,
Thou safe may'st find thy flow'ret sweet
Blooming on heaven's fair shore.

"Mu."

THE VOICE.

THERE is a wailing voice which cries
For ever from the ocean,
When the great angry waves arise,
In long low lines against the skies,
And, with a sullen motion,
Dash themselves against the rocks,
Raising a cloud of foam, which mocks
Their sullenness—then falling, dies.

Or when the moon, with radiant face,
Shines on the sea's broad breast,
And woos her with such tender grace,
That, yielding to the soft embrace,
She sinks entranced to rest;
And a soft sleep steals over all,
Unbroken, save by the sea-gull's call,
As he seeks his watery nest.

Out, out afar he wheels his flight,
Where the sky and waters meet,
Till, like a speck in the waning light,
Fading away he is lost to sight,
'Mid shadows dim and fleet;
While from the ocean, calm and deep,
A cool soft mist doth slowly creep,
And shrouds the mountain's feet.

And when the wind moans drearily,
  Among the leafless trees,
In storm or calm, by land or sea,
Still that same voice comes unto me,
  Borne on the wings of the breeze:
"Change and decay: change and decay:
All that is earthly fadeth away."

"*Mu.*"

SONNETS OF THE CAPE.

I.

The Oak Avenue, Cape Town.

Oft, when my feet at evening homeward tread
The stately cloisters of the oak along,
My fervent soul breaks into grateful song,
And I a glad, rapt worshipper am led.
God, what a glorious prospect is outspread!
Impersoned nature here hath built her shrine:
On yon great altar sacrifice divine
She offers to her Maker. On the head
Of the majestic peak upon the west,
Her favoured seat, at eve oft sitteth she,
Soothing the busy city into rest,
Whilst the sun setting lights the golden sea.
Here, in thy fane, bright Presence, I divest
My heart of lower thoughts, and bow to heaven and thee.

II.

Night.

Dost thou not love, O angel of the night,
Above all others this fair southern land?
For thou hast gemmed its skies with lavish hand,
With rarest stars and constellations bright.

Shines not its vestal moon with purer light?
Hath not its galaxy more lustrous hue,
While star-clouds, set in heavens more deeply blue,
Still gladden ours, as erst Magellan's sight?
O would that while the old grey mountains sleep
There might be silence in the which to find
Grand music! But if joyous creatures keep
Perpetual chorus, shall my captious mind
Object? Creation's harmonies lie deep,
But to the soul attuned the parts are well combined.

G. Longmore.

AFTER A STORM.

Morning has come upon us,—from the day
Has rolled each darkling cloud, the orient view
Unveils with gorgeous sun, and deep clear blue.
But ocean riots still;—in ponderous play
Thousands of heavy surges plunge away,
Dazzling with snow-white foam, or swiftly woos
Iris to paint all brightly tinted hues.
Strangely fair magic, 'mid their shivered spray,
Around us many a little whale-bird skims,
Dipping its tiny bosom in the deep,
Then instantly uprises blithe and high,
Even as the heart unthralled by earthly things
Will walk this troubled earth, yet ever keep
Its dearest home up in the azure sky.

E. B. Watermeyer.

LAY ME LOW.

Lay me low, my work is done;
I am weary, lay me low
Where the wild flowers woo the sun,
Where the balmy breezes blow,
Where the butterfly takes wing,
Where the aspens drooping grow,
Where the young birds chirp and sing—
I am weary, let me go.

I have striven hard and long
In the world's unequal fight
Always to resist the wrong,
Always to maintain the right;
Always with a stubborn heart
Taking, giving blow for blow:
Brother, I have played my part,
And am weary, let me go.

Stern the world and bitter cold,
Irksome, painful to endure;
Everywhere a love of gold,
Nowhere pity for the poor;
Everywhere mistrust, disguise,
Pride, hypocrisy, and show;
Draw the curtain, close mine eyes,
I am weary, let me go.

Others, 'chance, when I am gone,
  May restore the battle-call,
Bravely lead the good cause on,
  Fighting in the which I fall;
God may quicken some true soul
  Here to take my place below
In the heroes' muster-roll:
  I am weary, let me go.

Shield and buckler, hang them up;
  Drape the standard on the wall:
I have drained the mortal cup
  To the finish, dregs and all.
When our work is done 'tis best,
  Brother, best that we should go:
I'm aweary, let me rest,
  I'm aweary, lay me low.

John Noble.

IDEAL BEAUTY.

PAINT me a picture where the golden hair,
Like sunlight, falls around the chiselled face
Of Grecian imaging;—limn me the grace
Of spiritual beauty, jewel rare,
In features human yet divinely fair:
Let, through the dark-blue splendour of the eye,
Ethereal Hope shine star-like with chaste Love,
And on the brow a wisdom from above,
And on the lip a happy secret lie,
Fraught with the spirit's sweetest sorcery;
Suffuse her face with Music, and the charm—
The animated glow of lofty Thought;
Let Cynthia's mien, with stately mildness fraught
And queenly grace, adorn th' ideal form;
And let it stand on some green isle of bliss,
Where seraphs stoop to woo her witching kiss.

"*Kappa.*"

WORDS.

"WORDS are the coin of fools," so spake the sage;
"But tables of the wise, whereon they count
The golden gems of thought, and keep the page
Of reckoning." So, brother, be the amount
Of all thou sayest or shalt say to men
The product of a pure, truth-seeking mind,
And symbols of deep thought, tried and refined,
Won from the mine of rich experience; then
Shall all thy words be gold, and will outlast
The eating rust of Time, and men will say,
When thou art dead—looking upon thy past—
"This man hath earned him a fair name for aye!"
And in the inmost shrine of memory
They'll rear a precious monument for thee.

"Kappa."

A SONNET.

MAN seems a waif cast on the stream of time,
That bears him onward to the unknown shore;
That longed for, fearéd, dread, mysterious clime,
Toward which all hasten—to return no more.
Yet not so helpless is he as he seems,
Nor void of power to guide life's barque aright,
If Faith sits at the helm, and Hope's bright beams
Shine o'er the troubled waters when 'tis night,
Guiding and cheering like a beacon light,
Till peace is gained and life's cares gone like dreams.
Thence looking back o'er Time's brief, troubled way,
How vain must seem each earthly joy or care!
This thought should cheer us on from day to day,
To work and wait, to bear and to forbear.

T. McCall.

SONNET.

Slow fades the sunlight from each lonely hill,
And the pale half-moon paints with shadowy hue
The sleeping earth; how soon doth night renew
Watch o'er a world—so passionless, so still!
So free from all the turbulent thoughts that fill
And thrill the human soul, deep hid from view!
Oh! would that we poor, tired mortals, too,
Might seek and find repose. Ah! not until
We learn, through life, to know and understand
The million chords—struck by some unseen hand
On the responsive, yearning soul of man—
Strange and conflicting since the world began;
Then all of beauty, truth, and love will find
Abiding echo in our heart and mind.

Ralph Renaude.

THE DIGGER'S SONG.

Oh, mates, the veldt is brown and bare,
And drought is on the land;
But beneath lie the glittering veins of gold,
Like the cords in this broad brown hand.
Then dig for the glittering gold!
Dig for the wealth untold!
Dig with a fire that can never tire,
Down, down to the glittering gold.

Oh, mates, we left some living friends
Away across the sea;
But my sweetheart here, in the brown earth's breast,
Is dearer far to me.
Then hurrah for the glittering gold!
Hurrah for the wealth untold!
We'll win it, we'll spend it, we'll drink it, we'll lend it,
We'll live for the glittering gold.

My sweetheart's hair is yellow, bright
As the sun in yonder sky;
But shy my sweetheart is, and dark
The place where she does lie.
Then drink to the glittering gold!
Drink to the wealth untold!
Drink deep and long, with laughter and song,
Drink, drink to the glittering gold!

My sweetheart's bright as the rising sun,
And cold as the waning moon;
And hard as the stones in the water-course
'Neath the dust and glare of noon.
Then a health to the glittering gold!
A health to the wealth untold!
A health, my lads, to the fairest of maids,
A health to the glittering gold!

Amy Sutherland.

THE BRITON'S HOMELAND.

(A COLONIST'S IMPERIAL SONG.)

Sons of Britannia! scattered wide,
Wherever rolls blue ocean's tide;
Sons of the men who proudly bore
Fair Freedom's flag to each far shore;
Ye, who yet round the homeland clinging,
Hear History's echoes grandly ringing;
Ye, who on many a distant coast,
Your British name still fondly boast—
Say, shall your ancient country be
Shorn of her rank by land or sea?

A thousand years have known her name!
A thousand fights attest her fame!
Around her island throne there runs
The blood of myriads of her sons!
The light of Freedom gilds her story,
The Patriot's service seals her glory!
Fierce is the loyal flame that fires
The worthy sons of worthy sires!
Nay, never shall our country be
Shorn of her rank by land or sea.

Let but the foeman speak the word,
Let war's wild shriek but once be heard;
Forth from the sheath the sword shall spring,
From land to land the cry shall ring!

Peace shall her spell impose no longer,
Honour than gain shall prove the stronger.
Fealty and faith, our strength of yore,
Shall fearless face a world once more;
Nor ever shall our country be
Shorn of her rank by land or sea.

Hark! through old England's world-wide bounds,
The shout of love and succour sounds:
From vast Acadia's woodland vales,
From far Australia's golden dales,
From India's many-peopled lands,
From Southern Afric's struggling bands;
Wherever English foot hath trod,
Or English knee bends low to God,
They say that ne'er our land shall be
Shorn of her rank by land or sea.

O England! home of homes, we swear,
While we the claims of sonship share,
Whilst thou to us art staunch and true,
Shall we to thee give royal due.
For thee with earth's rude powers contending,
Our hearts and arms their strength are spending.
Thy tongue we speak, thy laws we spread,
Through savage realms thy rights we shed;
Nor e'er shalt thou, our country, be
Shorn of thy rank by land or sea.

O'erweening foes may band their might—
Our steadfast Isle stands firm to fight!
Her homes no victor-hosts despoil,
No hostile foot e'er shames her soil.

Deep are the constant seas that lave her,
Close bound the British hearts that save her.
One arm! one hope! one thought! one soul!
Sworn fast to keep her Empire whole!
Nay, never shall old England be
Shorn of her rank by land or sea!

Anonymous.

EMPIRE DAY.

(MAY 24TH.)

Love we our Motherland,
The Eden home of mighty realms to be,
The nation-teeming isle;
Despite her scowling strand,
She wears the soaring glance, the victor's smile—
Radiant, storm-ridden, as the meteor free,
An opal dawn set in a night of sea.

World-warder fitly laid
Upon the azure margin of the earth,
Amid the wave's wide swirl,
Amid the tempest's raid,
For civic right and manhood's worth
To testify thro' Time's tempestuous whirl,
She sped the vital spark whose kindling ray
Clove the long night that broke to Freedom's day.

Firm rides the anchored barque,
With iron grip defying wind and wave,
Safeguarding all within;
Above, the storm hangs dark,
Around, the seething waters rage;
Fearless she meets the elemental din;
Fearless they rest who braved the tempest's power,
Contrasting present peace with danger's hour.

Deep calleth unto deep;
In happy unison the waters roll
About the channelled earth;
Beneath the sun-scorched steep,
Around the ice-embattled Pole,
They chant one anthem from creation's birth,
Still testifying to the eternal sun:
"For power and for glory we are one."

Firm-rooted thrives the oak;
In goodly fellowship its parts endure,
Each minister to each;
From lashing tempest's stroke
In winter's icy grasp secure,
Still eloquent the genial law to teach—
"So sun and cloud their timely succour give,
In loyal brotherhood we stand and live."

So may our England stand,
Fruitful, strong-rooted, fair in branch and stem,
A full and perfect whole;
Such as assailing hand
May not provoke or dare contemn,
Or foul the calm that marks her mild control;
With one strong will confronting all mischance,—
Her peace sure warrant for the world's advance.

For strong and staunch and true,
Strongest in peril, true to loftiest ends,
For freedom and for right,
She the world's champion grew,
And still the freeman's cause defends;

While all the storied Past's resplendent night,
'Mid thrilling echoes of the world's acclaim,
Glows with the starry wonder of her fame.

Such heritage is ours,
A royal lineage, a knightly trust,
A world-enthralling name:
She that so richly dowers
Her children, bids them but be just
And true and steadfast to the parent's fame,
Keeping enshrined, whatever chance betide,
Old England's glory in her children's pride.

Prize we that golden life,
The woven web of splendid memories,
The legend glory-lit;
In deeds of valiant strife,
In amplest fruit of highest enterprise,
In heaven-blest energies the word is writ;
For worthy sons who guard her high renown
Full worthy she to wear the Imperial crown.

J. G.

IN MEMORIAM.

(ALFRED TENNYSON, *obit* 1892.)

FAREWELL, great bard, a glorious memory now—
For all who knew thy spell,
The circling Moon upon thy dark'ning brow
Laid fit farewell.

Rightly thou would'st that no unseemly tears
Should mar thy closing day—
The laurelled victor 'mid acclaiming cheers
Should pass away.

More fit the note of praise, the reverent boast,
To sound his passing knell,
Who sang of all we love and cherish most,
And sang so well:

Who filled a nation's heart with quickening fire
Of white-robed Virtue's lore,
Who wrought sweet music from his Saxon lyre,
Unheard before:

Who drew our footsteps to the shining heights
Above earth's misty zone,
Where shafts break ever from the crystal lights
About the Throne:

Who weighed in faithful scales the knightly mood,
Set true for peace or strife,
The jewel worth of gracious womanhood,
Man's light of life:

Who loved his land with passion high and just,
Nor feared, whate'er should fail,
That she, who bears the great world's sacred trust,
Would still prevail.

Farewell, the banner of thy country's pride
Enshrouds thy mortal frame.
In grateful hearts of myriads shall abide
Thy deathless name.

J. G.

VASCO DA GAMA.

(CHRISTMAS, 1497.) [1]

THEY were sick at heart and weary, they were tired of wind and wave,
They saw no beauty in the sea, it seemed to them their grave;
Two moons had grown and gone again since they had looked their last
Upon the mount whose beetling brow braves the Antarctic blast;
Morn after morn had found them still one speck upon the sea,
Eve after eve had left them yet all landless on the lee:
And ever as the day arrived more sad, and stern, and strange
The ocean seemed to be to them; it bore no other change.
And ever as the night came more lonely, lost, and drear
Those seamen felt, as northward, ho! their course they strove to steer.

For all that those old mariners around them heard or saw
Seemed more and more from olden things their present life to draw—

[1] Port Natal was discovered by the great navigator, Vasco da Gama, on Christmas Day 1497, and was accordingly named by him "The Land of the Nativity."

New stars that bore no meaning; new birds with mournful cries—
The very brine, so deep and dark, was foreign to their eyes;
While as the days and weeks flew on, and seasons came and went,
Alone on that untravelled sea the snail-like hours were spent.
No wand'rer o'er an austral wild, no desert-planted palm,
Could more completely be possessed of isolation's charm;
For on the vacant surges of that great southern deep
None but this band of voyagers fell on Christmas-Eve asleep.
Oh! ye that now in giant barks o'er subject oceans speed,
Give to the men that dared them first their peril-purchased meed.
Oh! ye to whom in later times the sea brings few scant fears,
Honour as best befits their fame those staunch old pioneers.

They had left remote behind them—like a memory growing dim,
The shores of Spain—imperial Spain—power, great, and proud, and grim.
They had seen, discreetly distant, the false Moor's gloomy realm,
While with a sign devout they guarded well the willing helm;

And many tales of torture and of death were that night told
By men whose hearts beat hotly with the hates they learnt of old.
Then as the sun rose higher, during many a long, long day,
They crawled along a coast that never tempted them to stay,—
Where sandy shores lay bleaching, stark, beneath a fervid sky;
Where burnished seas, unruffled, but racked the aching eye;
Where rivers, wide and torpid, crept through banks of forest gloom,
And breathed across the tainted beach the vapours of the tomb;
Where, under Palma's lofty steep, the rock-thrown shadows rest;
Or where Biafra's friendly bight bends to the mystic west;
All down those links of sullen capes; all down that stricken strand,
Where Nature stood with callous front and man with hostile hand;
With bodies never weary, and with spirits never faint,
They sped all trustful in the care of Heaven and guardian saint.
Oh! how these sailors' simple hearts with pious hope beat high
When first they saw the sacred Cross hung in the southern sky;
And soon the gladdening tidings had leapt from lip to lip,

That Heaven itself was smiling on the devious voyaging ship.
Deep was the joy that crowned their hopes when high above them reared,
Wreathed in its folded films of fog, the mountain bold and weird;
The mountain under whose bleak brow the great seas bask or break,
And round whose rock-built basements now vast fleets their courses take;
Nor was the Christmas-tide far off when they again set sail,
Bent still, the good Lord helping them, the Indian coast to hail.

Rounding the sea-girt Cape, whose crest rose high above the mast;
Rounding L'Agulhas' sandy point, seen from the mast at last;
Keeping all closely to the shore, for fear of surge and tide,
The little bark clung to her course, that cruel coast beside.
She passed the gaping cliffs through which the Knysna's waters flow,
And swung secure in sheltered coves when southern gales did blow.
Yon yawning bay whose leafless shore was then all bleak and bare,
Whose busy waters now are thronged by ships that gather there,—
At last behind them passed from sight, and then for days and weeks,

Driven far out by baffling winds, fighting with stubborn leaks,
They tossed, the prey of bitter storm, from ruthless wave to wave,
They strove with slowly deepening gloom their sinking ship to save,
Till in the depth of mute despair they knelt upon the deck,
And prayed that Jesu—Mary's son—would keep their lives from wreck.
They prayed, and as their souls thus spoke, hope in their bosoms rose,
And many a weary eye that night in sleep could calmly close.

A flush upon yon eastern sky where glows the Magi's star,
A bank of blackness looming large, as land that heaves afar,
Through throbbing hearts a sudden thrill, that quickens as the morn
Breaks with its summer glory on the day when Christ was born.

Oh! joy to our long weary hearts; oh! hopes of getting home,
Oh! goodly sun, and kindly sea, and tender sky, God's dome,
Oh! land, whose pleasant lineaments, to these our dazzled eyes,
Are glorious as were Canaan's heights to Israel's thankful spies.

Softly the bush-swathed shore arose in backward sloping hills,
Whose swarthy sides hid rushing streams or bent to rippling rills.
Softly those serried bluffs disclosed deep valleys winding far,
'Mid gloom of tufted woodland, or stern frown of naked scar.
Softly the mottled heights upsprung in ever-rising tiers,
Whose rifted marge far westward seen in distance disappears.
Well might those simple-hearted men, as towards the coast they drew,
With pious unction bless the land thus bursting on their view.
Well might they say that surely 'twas God's purpose true and kind,
That they upon great Jesu's Day this brave new land should find.

J. R.

AUTUMN SUNSHINE.

The sunshine went a-straying
  One gracious harvest morn,
While autumn winds were playing
  Among the yellow corn.

The reapers' necks and faces
  She dyed deep berry-brown,
And draped in mystic graces
  The smoky toiling town.

She kissed in sober sadness
  The flowers too soon to fade,
And pierced in merry gladness
  The orchard's bosky glade.

The leaves, before her shrinking,
  Disclosed the apples green,
That blushed red-ripe for thinking
  How idle they had been.

She dropped, in noon-day dreaming,
  Her necklace in a pool,
And left the jewels gleaming
  Amid its waters cool.

She climbed with motion queenly
  The mountain's rugged breast,
And slept, brief space! serenely
  Calm on its cloudy crest.

Thence on the sea descending,
She trod with footsteps bold;
For ever westward trending,
A track of heaving gold.

At last, with travel drooping,
She sought her crimson bed,
And forth the stars came trooping
To watch the world instead.

T. W.

MAY MORNING, NATAL.

Are the days so long and the nights so dreary,
That we must yearn for the bygone years?
Are souls so sad and hearts so weary
That men have time for tears?

In English orchards the birds are singing;
In English valleys the grass is green;
In English lanes the lads are bringing
May to crown their queen.

Yet all the gold of an orange garden,
And all the green of the sugar-cane,
Prompts a pitiful prayer for pardon
Whenever we complain.

And in English homes, if the merry-making
Would lag a little, our Loved might say,
"Somewhere May-day is breaking
For Someone far away."

Jack Saville Judd.

MEMORY.

The muse in solitude was nurst,
In solitude her songs began;
From some lone burning bosom burst
The tide of song, that as it ran
In glory o'er the golden sands
Of memory back to childhood's prime,
Revived the drooping shadowy bands
Of feelings, tender or sublime;
Thoughts, images, beloved or feared;
Tears, smiles, regrets, whate'er the wing
Of Time had scattered first, then seared,
Or left in darkness withering—
All were renewed in that blest hour
Of boundless passion, boundless power.

The Past—no more a dreary waste,
Which the sad spirit feared to roam—
Now charmed the wanderer from her haste
To seek with hope a distant home.
She now beheld in Fancy's light
Serene, eternal, ever new,
Bowers, skies, more beautiful and bright
Than her aspiring ardour drew
In dreams, for coming years of bliss;
And all her own. No mortal power,
Nor chance, nor change, can snatch from this
Clear mirror one enchanted flower;
No fears disturb, no sorrows wait
In this fair world redeemed from fate.

John Fairbairn.

TO THE SEA.

O! THOU wild, tempestuous ocean,
Well communes my heart with thee,
In the ever-ceaseless motion,
In the changing hues I see:
How I love thee,
Emblem of the soul to me:

In thy restless, anxious tossing,
In thy struggles to be free,
Doth my spirit, vext with crossing,
Boundless ocean, beat with thee;
Ever varying,
How our fitful moods agree:

Dashing o'er the rocks opposing,
Lashing with thy wave the shore;
Now in gentle calm reposing,
Now convulsed with anger o'er;
How I love thee,
Nearer, dearer than before.

Now I know the ebb and flowing,
Sunny morn and low'ring eve;
Know the coming and the going,
How to joy, and how to grieve:
In my knowing,
Ocean, thou too canst believe.

To the murmur of thy sadness
Breathes my heart a kindred sigh;
Thy serenity of gladness
Knew I too in days gone by.
Yes, I love thee
With a strange intensity.

Salt thy brine, but teardrops salter
Flow to mingle with thy tide;
Burning thoughts from lips that falter,
As I wander by thy side,
I can tell thee;
Tell to thee, and none beside.

Art thou ruthless in destroying?
Time is yet a wilder sea;
With our hopes of youthhood toying,
Scatt'ring all with careless glee;
Till he leaves us
Wrecks of what we used to be.

Yet the flower of hope is blooming
On one rock above the spray,
All the distant East illuming,
Glows the promise of the day;
Time's dark ocean
Lit with an eternal ray.

"*Thistle.*"

LAMENT OF THE TREK OX.

Inspanned, early and late,
With the galling yoke on my neck—
To toil and strain 'neath the stinging lash
Till I drop—is my wretched fate!

O man! with the horny hand,
O man! with the stony heart,
Ere the sun goes down, if but for an hour,
For dear God's sake, "outspan."

For days and nights I've pulled
With my mates your fleecy load,
Through parched Karoo and sapless bush,
Till we heard the cry of the wild seamew
And the breakers thundering loud.

The breeze from the water cool
Gave life to our throbbing heart,
And we trekked again with right good will,
To drink of the promised draught.

In vain, once more in vain,
For tied to the hateful yoke,
Through the chilly night on the iron road
Till the day began to break.

On the cold and barren strand
We lay the weary night,
Till the God-sent sun arose once more
On our limbs,—like iron bands.

With feet worn through, and wasted frame,
We stagger along the road;
Arrived in the sharp and stony street,
We stand, while the men off load.

'Mid the rush of eager men,
As they hurry along the street,
We stand, and wonder what it means,
And bemoan our cruel fate.

All day without water or food
We pant in the blazing heat,
And visions dim of the shady wood
And river's cool retreat

Pass through our weary hearts,
Till the evening sun goes down,—
When the startling shot of the terrible thong
Hurries us out of the town.

"Weary, and wounded, and worn,"
We stagger in front of the load,
And we stupidly wonder if men have hearts,
Or is there indeed a God?

A God, all wise and good,
Who lists to His creature's cry?
'Tis hard to be understood;
To be born, and suffer, and die.

F. F.

TO YOUNG SOUTH AFRICA.

Lo! a dream-shape in the distance beckoning on to nobler deeds:
Up, my brethren, rise and follow where the star-wreathed vision leads;
Leave your toil of fruitless labour, vainly with o'er-wearied hands
Weaving aye your web of fortune from the dull earth's yellow sands,
Striving with your lofty talents to enslave yourselves to clay,
Chaining spirits born for ages to the task-work of a day.

Toil!—but not for wasteful nothings; toil!—but not for self alone;
This it is "for ever rolling upwards still the rolling stone";
This it is the curse of Eden, still bequeathed from man to man:
"Strive but vainly,—work and gain not," echoing aye the angel's ban.
Yet upon this curse a blessing when the god-like human will
Moulds it unto glorious purpose, and doth hallow all the ill!

Never sainted prophet stricken prostrate on the burning sod,
Trembling 'neath the awful glory streaming from the present God,

Heard in earthquake, flame, or stillness, aught more
holy than the truth
Echoed by our mother Nature from her dawn of
early youth
Through all ages—"Man is God-like—weak and
erring, suffering man,—
God-like in the thoughts he thinketh, God-like in the
deeds he can."

Yea! and with the curse upon him, more he proves
his lofty birth
Than in yon old Eden dwelling, sated with the ease
of earth,
When he strives for men around him, battles for his
brother's right;
When he spreads amid the darkness rays of never-
dying light—
Rays that calmly shining from him reach the weary
sufferer's breast,
Warm once more the frozen feelings, bringing ease
to his unrest;
Rays whose widely-beaming brilliance shows all men
one brotherhood,
Man then only rightly human when he yearns for
human good.

Mighty nations then most glorious when their world-
wide cherished name
Is a succour to the helpless,—unto tyrants fear and
shame!
When their deeds have been of justice, mercies done
and wisdom spread,

Waking noble aspirations where the human soul
seemed dead;
God-like then is human labour: brethren rend'ring
brethren blest,
Feel themselves divinely nurtured, know a God within
their breast.

Yet,—for ye have erred, my brethren,—ye have scorned
the blessed gift,
Wearying strength that is immortal in the selfish race
of thrift;
Lo! your dead religion's priesthood onward with your
earth-god reels!
Earthward, sacrificial victims! Stain with blood the
chariot-wheels!
Perish there; your work is ended, as your sordid work
ye chose,
Death, corruption, base oblivion, guerdon of your toils
and throes:
Worse yet than the senseless sluggard who his talent
laid in earth,
Thus to lower to dishonour all that proves man's
primal worth.

Veiling as a thing forgotten, hid from you in Nature's
tome,
This, as the broad sunlight blazing—"Elsewhere is
your spirit's home"—
Darkening the glorious vision which all men have felt
in youth,
Of majestic human grandeur blended quite with God-
like youth.

Who shall blush not, O my brethren, naming this his fatherland,
Where no noble thoughts have been, where no noble deed is plann'd?
Nay, but earthworms wriggling onwards crawl unto a heap of gold,
And an instant altar rises and a craven prayer is told.

Lo! three centuries have vanished since the pennon was unfurled
Wafting wisdom from the fountains welling in the ancient world;
Since the sacred Cross was planted at the baptism of our land,
That it may enjoy communion with the Christian nation's band.
Christians came; and shrunk the savage from his father's old abode,
For he knew no more the tenure on which earth is held from God;
Dwelling 'mid the brutes around him, scarce himself a nobler brute,
All high thoughts of human greatness from his breast torn by the root.

Then came men, our pilgrim fathers, noblest blood of sunny France—
Broad-browed men of free-born spirit, lighted with the eagle glance;
Spoiled by bigot priest and despot of the broad lands of their line,
Rich yet in the glorious freedom that dares know itself divine:

Hither came they—welcomed hither by the gallant
Northern race
Whom they well might own for brethren, breast to
breast in close embrace—
Those staunch darers of the waters who first broke
the giant force
That would rule man's free convictions as the rider
guides his horse;
Struggling and despairing never, till at length they
gained the war—
Spain, the hope of priest-led tyrants; Holland, free-
dom's polar star.

Lo! such union of such nations! Gaze into the future's
scope,
Not in vain name these their country land of soul-
exalting hope!
Knowledge see they ever widening, man no longer
scorning man;
Truth diffusing each to other, aiding the Creator's plan;
Breaking free from earthly fetters, giant souls of
thoughtful men,
Meeting wisdom in their equals far beyond their
former ken,
Wisdom which they erst deemed falsehood, hated with
the hate of hell,
When their minds were cramped within them, shrunk
in earth-pride's narrow shell..

Better were it had old ocean swept the wave-tossed
ships away,
Than that from such large-souled fathers sprang the
pigmies of to-day;

Stalking lords of all around us, blinded with our petty pride,
Higher, maybe, than the savage whom we scoff at and deride.
Where the deeds that we can point to worthy of our father's name?
Where the single gleam of glory in the darkness of our shame?
Where the broad and furrowed foreheads, watchers for all human kind,
Radiant with the thoughtful paleness, signal of the earnest mind?

Anonymous.

MARGUERITE.[1]

Born of the moonlight, cradled in foam,
  Deep beneath Oman's waters
A pearl lay nestled within its home;
  Where the laughter of the sea-nymph's daughters
Came ringing along through the rock-roofed caves
  Which they made their gladsome dwelling,
And shivered the crests of the wind-swept waves
  That over their heads were swelling.

Down where the twilight is misty and green,
  Where the gold sands cradle the amber,
Where the richest gems of the main are seen
  And the snaky sea-weeds clamber;
Where the sea-shells sing the songs they caught
  When they roved on the seething billow,
Ere they laid them down, like a solemn thought,
  To serve for the Peri's pillow;

Close lay the pearl within its shell
  Till the hand of the diver caught it,
And, tearing it forth from its natal cell,
  To the glare of the daylight brought it.
Snatched from the home of its magic birth,
  While the waters sobbed their sadness,
The song of the Peris rose to earth
  From their happy homes of gladness:—

[1] Precious Pearl.

"Child of the ocean, we Peris shall miss thee,
Gone from the cleft where thou usedst to hide;
Never again shall the sea-weed kiss thee,
As it lazily swings in the murmuring tide;
Never again, O child of the ocean,
Shall the song of the conches lull thee to rest,
As softly moving in dreamy motion
We rocked thee to sleep on our snowy breast.
But our wishes shall follow wherever thou goest,
Though far over mountain and sea thou should'st roam,
And, whate'er in thy new life befalls thee, thou knowest
We remember thee still in thy ocean home."

So it wandered through many a land
From its ocean depths of azure;
Lingering now by some tropic strand,
Now borne beside the glacier;
Ever ablaze with the beauty's light
Which its wondrous birth had given;—
One had deemed it a seraph's tear-drop bright,
If the angels weep in heaven.

But at length it reached the long-sought rest
For which it had wandered far,
When I placed it upon my darling's breast,
Where it shone like the morning star;
And yet, for all it gleamed so bright
As it lay in her bosom fair,
It blushed to find itself less white,
And glowed a ruby there.

Anonymous.

THE STRENGTH OF LIFE.

The wild waves dash on the storm-beat sands
In fierce, tempestuous glee;
And the cold grey rocks are madly lashed
In colder, greyer sea;
The fisherman's wife is on her knees,
And the laughing boy is still;
For a frail bark strives in the surging main
To combat Nature's will.

The pain-pierced eyes are tearless,
And the suffering lips are white,
For aching heart and throbbing brain
Heave with tumultuous might.
Ah! sad for the passionate soul,
Whose fierce, mad strength is vain
To stem the surging tide of woe,
Or vanquish and restrain.

But the wavelets creep on the sun-lit shore,
Breaking in fitful glee;
And the fisher-boy marks from the gleaming rocks
Shades on the azure sea;
The mother sings to her sleeping babe
While the fisherman mends his net,
And a thousand storms have changed to calm
Since day arose and set.

For a noble truth and a peaceful trust
  Shine in the earnest eye;
And the passionate heart hath found the strength
  That cannot fail or die.
Ah! well if the lesson of life
  Be learnt at a Saviour's feet,
And ours press the silver shore
  Where Faith and Patience meet.

Z.

DE PROFUNDIS.

The dying sun, with mellow ray,
Illum'd the deep'ning gloom
Of carvéd apse and storied bay
And costly sculptur'd tomb.
On aisle and chapel, choir and shrine,
The morient beam delay'd;
Its ling'ring beauty, half divine,
Upon the altar stray'd.

Before that altar knelt a man
Absorbed in earnest pray'r;
His pallid face, with suff'ring wan,
Was overcast with care.
Fast, fast the eager tear-drops rolled
Adown his bronzèd cheek,
His heaving bosom's sobs foretold
His very heart would break.

His harness, all of metal tried,
Was cunningly inlaid
With jewels rare, and by his side
His golden helm display'd;
A silken scarf, of gorgeous sheen,
Upon his breast he wore,
And rev'rently, his hands atween,
A crucifix he bore.

"My heart is black with sin!" he cried,
"My soul can find no rest;
Extend Thine arms of mercy wide
And take me to Thy breast.
Canst Thou deny one soul relief
For whom Thy blood was shed?
Didst Thou not save the sorrowing thief
E'en as death bow'd Thy head?"

Athwart the altar passed a glow
From out the western heav'n—
The Messenger of Peace, to show
His guilt was all forgiven.
Uprais'd in hope, his glazing eye
With rapture's light was fired;
He sank before the Altar High,
And in a smile expir'd.

. . . . .

For vespers rang the cloister bell;
The abbot with his train,
Each from his solitary cell,
Came slowly in amain;
The rising moonbeams softly broke
Upon that prostrate head;
The solemn organ sweetly woke
Its requiem for the dead.

"Omicron."

ANSWERED.

Weary, with tired eyes that sought
Some answer to an hopeless thought;
Sad, with remembrance of dead years,
That woke with the bright flush of morn,
But faded in a mist of tears
Before their promise could be born,—
I stood awhile upon the verge
Of a far-rolling sweep of sea,
Whose fading distance seemed to merge
Into the vast eternity.

The ghosts of things that had been dead,
Yet lived again;
The salt of tears was on my tongue;
The sound of bitter sobbing, wrung
From hearts which Joy had cursed and fled,
Was in my brain;
And from the main,
Borne on a sudden tremulous breath
Of air that chilled me as the touch of death,
Came an exceeding bitter cry,
As of a soul in mortal pain:
"All that is fair shall die!"

I did not know it was my own:
So the gloom deepened; then there came,—
First in faint echoes from afar
That gathered, as an undertone,
In most hushed stillness, to one sound,—
The mention of an awful name:
And the same instant flashed around
The sudden glory of a risen star.

"Omicron."

THE CHIEF.

Down in the low, dim lands, where forest trees
  Hung shadow curtains out across the sky,
And only branches whispering in the breeze
  Awoke the echo's sigh;

Down through the gardens, where dark shadows pass
  Unchallenged and unhindered year by year,
Tottering, past the tufts of yellow grass,
  He came—a Chief *pour rire*.

Lord of a land where famine lurked amid
  The nibbled mealie-cobs that strewed the ground,
King of a realm where fell disease, half-hid,
  Bred hideous shadows round.

Monarch, perhaps, of half a hundred huts,
  One of the relics of a vanished day,
Hedged in with all the mockery that shuts
  The king with feet of clay.

His garb?—A blanket dragging in the sand
  For kingly robes, a band of bark for crown,
Necklet of beads for royal insignia, and
  A rein to belt his gown.

His retinue?—A brother-relic strayed
  Some steps behind, bearing a gourd with care,
Some remnant of humanity decayed,
  With fat-anointed hair.

From shadows passing, shadow-ward they went;
  Nor gave me greeting, as I sat the while
Beside the looped-up doorway of my tent,
  The tedium to beguile.

Only, it chanced, some tribesmen slouching by
  Stiffened their backs, and turned to greet their
    king
With ceremonious clapping, and a cry
  That made the red rocks ring.

I turned, and caught the pride that lit his face,
  The sudden majesty that fired his brain—
Old and forgotten stories of his race
  Glowed in his eyes again.

Then, silence—and his eyes were veiled anew—
  Stiffly, he hobbled onward as he came.
"Faith!" said I, musing as he passed from view—
  "Is kingship but a name?"

Cullen Gouldsbury.

THE PACE OF THE OX.

What do we know—and what do we care—for Time,
and his silver scythe,
Since there is always time to spare, so long as a man's
alive?—
The world may come, and the world may go, and the
world may whistle by,
But the pace of the ox is steady and slow, and life is a
lullaby.

What do we know of the city's scorn, the hum of a
world amaze,
Hot-foot haste, and the fevered dawn, and forgotten
yesterdays?—
For men may strain, and women may strive in busier
lands to-day,
But the pace of the ox is the pace to thrive in the land
of Veldt and Vlei.

The daylight breaks in the Eastern sky, and sinks to
sleep in the West;
Thus it is that our days go by, bringing their meed of
rest.
The Future's hidden behind the veil, and the Past—is
still the past,
And the pace of the ox is the sliding scale that measures
our work at last.

The song of the ships is far to hear, the hum of the world is dead,
And lotus-life in a drowsy year our benison instead—
Why should we push the world along, live in a world of flame,
When the pace of the ox is steady and strong, and the end is just the same?

Cullen Gouldsbury.

VOLKSLIED.

(DUTCH OLD NATIONAL ANTHEM.)

Een boer is maar een arme ding;
De rede zal ik nou maar zing,
Al werk hij door met hand en mond,
Verdien hij in een jaar maar schaars een pond.
Hij het nie tijd om uit te rij,
Zoo kan hij ook nie lekker vrij;
En als een meisje hij wilvra,
Dan seh zij die werk is al te zwaar,—
Zoo een boer, hij is maar een arme ding,
Ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding,
Zoo een boer, hij is maar, enz.

Een gave ding is een boer, seh ek,
Want hij het rijklijk varkens' spek.
En waar is een man die een mooie vrouw
Zoo goed als een boer kan onderhou?
Zonder 'n boer zal wees geen brood,
En zonder kos gaat almal dood.
Zoo moet die mense die boere dank
Voor al die kos en al die drank,
Zoo een boer is tog een gave ding,
Ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding,
Zoo een boer is tog een gave ding,
Voornaam als hij een Engelschman ben.

Anonymous.

RELIGIOUS AND METAPHYSICAL POEMS.

FOLLOW THE LIGHT.

A DEWDROP in shade of slenderest blade;
A foam-flake on verge of mountainous surge;

Delusive lake where deserts bake,
Or passing shade by an eagle made;

One golden ray on a wintry day;
A cloud's brief bliss 'neath the sunset-kiss.

Life's toil and strain but this to gain!
When lasting treasure no thought can measure

He may surely find, who with steadfast mind
Keeps trimmed and bright the Inward Light.

That Light may lead where feet shall bleed,
And voices drear assail the ear,

When horrid sights shall throng the nights,
And days be rife with fears and strife.

The treasure by thee will be found, maybe,
Amid the rattle and smoke of battle.

Or far it may lie 'neath a flickering sky
'Mid wastes ablaze in the scorching rays.

Perchance it peers where Winter rears
In the Arctic zone his eternal throne;

Or far, it may be, 'neath the purple sea
On a weltering steep of the sunless deep.

But how or where be not thy care:
That priceless treasure no thought can measure,

He shall surely find who with steadfast mind
Keeps trimmed and bright the Inward Light.

Through toil, through pain, in loss, in gain,
By day, by night, follow the Light.

Rev. A. Vine Hall.

LORD OF ANGELS.

Lord of angels! from the splendour
  Where the hosts of light
Throng to do Thy will, Thou camest
  To our sin and night.

Camest Servant of the servile;
  Saviour of the lost;
Lord of angels!—Christ of Calvary!
  Careless of the cost.

Boundless love! sublime compassion!
  Gazing at Thy cross
Some have scorned the world's ambitions,
  Held its gain but loss.

Teach us all to know more nearly
  What Thy grief and love,
What our bitter need which drew Thee
  From the bliss above.

That our hearts with true devotion
  May be Thine to-day,
And our lives henceforward fruitful,
  In good works alway.

Rev. A. Vine Hall.

A HYMN.

When morn awakes our hearts
To pour the matin prayer;
When toil-worn day departs,
And gives a pause to care;
When those our souls love best
Kneel with us, in Thy fear,
To ask Thy peace and rest—
O God, our Father, hear!

When worldly snares without,
And evil thoughts within,
Stir up some impious doubt,
Or lure us back to sin;
When human strength proves frail,
And will but half sincere;
When faith begins to fail—
O God, our Father, hear!

When in our cup of mirth
The drop of trembling falls,
And the frail props of earth
Are crumbling round our walls;
When back we gaze with grief,
And forward glance with fear,
When faileth man's relief—
O God, our Father, hear!

When on the verge we stand
  Of the eternal clime,
And Death with solemn hand
  Draws back the veil of Time;
When flesh and spirit quake
  Before THEE to appear—
For the Redeemer's sake,
  O God, our Father, hear!

Thomas Pringle.

A HYMN.

"*Without Me ye can do nothing.*"—JOHN XV. 5.

NOT unto us, O Lord,
  But praise to Thee be given:
Thy love has saved us from the sword;
  Thy grace, when we have striven.

Created, Thee to sing,
  Save Thou our service bless,
The best that we can breathe or bring
  Is very nothingness.

Not ours one holy thought,
  Not ours one fleeting breath,
But that Thy grace the wonder wrought—
  Thou, Lord of life and death.

And simply that we stand
  Within this earthly light,
Was boon unsought, eternal planned
  In counsels infinite.

But yet more wondrous far—
  Left free our lot to choose,
Where gleam Thy rays, O Morning Star!
  We follow, or refuse.

Dread marvel of free-will!
  Can we withhold, or bring?
Oh, give us grace to choose Thee still,
  Dear Lord, Almighty King.

Mystery yet more sublime!
  In this our mortal hour,
The realms surpassing space and time
  Thou puttest in our power.

New-born a princely line,
  Made heirs of heavenly state,
The will to serve Thee, Lord, is Thine,
  On Whom all creatures wait.

Sweet Saviour, Mystic Grace,
  Who mad'st Thy servants free,
Grant us through life to seek Thy face,
  And reign at last with Thee.

George Ketl.

THOU HAST HIS CARE.

Look up, sad soul! Forget not how
The Master toil'd
When on this earth. His sacred brow
Was often soil'd
With labour's sweat. Then, labour thou,
Tho' joy-despoiled.

Nor think to find thy rest on earth!
Here is no sound
Of peace—but discord from our birth,
Until we've found
The grave. Life's, at its utmost worth,
A weary round

Of toil and care! Doth trial sore,
Or cruel scorn
O'erwhelm thee? Remember Him who wore
A crown of thorn!
How patiently His cross He bore
On shoulders worn.

And aching 'neath the load which press'd
Most heavily!
Ah, soul! by every little cross distress'd,
Ah! think how He
Was mock'd, and scorn'd, and sore oppress'd
With grief—for thee!

Take up thy burden, cheerfully;
Thou hast His care!
He will not let it heavier be
Than thou canst bear;
So follow Him, and thro' eternity
His glory share!

"*Mu.*"

LIFE.

Toiling always, reaping naught,
Never finding what is sought,
Life with all unrest is fraught,
Pain with joy walks hand in hand,
Casting shadows o'er the land,
A mysterious, mocking band.
Love draws but a fitful breath:
Hate soon steals her rosy wreath.
Life springs forth from ghastly Death.
How to part the tangled thread
Which before me now is spread,
I cannot tell. In pious dread,
At the footstool of my King
I will leave all questioning,
All my vain unravelling.

"*Mu.*"

THE PRAYER.

Talk not of prayers that fail; the prayers unheard
Are not the askings Paul meant when he said:
"Pray without ceasing." Be thou well assured,
The true petition, not of barren word,
But plumed of deed, scales Heaven overhead,
Where souls and suns from God's high throne are shed.
Pray without ceasing, let good deeds unfold
Like petals of a rose, until, complete,
The flower of asking, full and fair and sweet,
Is fit for God's right hand to take and hold.
False prayers are barren breath, like vapour rolled
Between men and the stars; they hide the feet
Of angels. But the true prayer, wise and meet,
From chiming sphere to sphere on high is told.

W. C. Scully.

AVE MARIA.

Night steals with silent wings
On tower and town,
The darkness creeps and clings
By dale and down,
The stars shine manifold
In Heaven above;
The world is grey and cold—
Give me thy love,
Mater amabilis
Ora pro me!

My heart is dark within
With fear and shame;
What respite may I win
From my self-blame?
I dare not lift mine eyes
To thy pure face—
O Mother, kind and wise,
Give me thy grace,
Mater castissima
Ora pro me!

One silver lamp burns low
Before thy feet,
Dim shadows come and go,
Vague murmurs fleet—

I seek through nights and days,
Disconsolate,
Beyond these gloomy ways,
The golden gate,
O Rosa mystica
Ora pro me!

J. R. E.

THE OPEN VISION.

Oh, to be out in the open!
Where the peace of God distills
In the whispering of leafy woods
And the lilt of limpid rills,
And the great calm of creation broods
On the strength of the holy hills.

Oh, to be out in the open!
With the blue sky over me,
Up-vaulting from the weather-gleam
Of the vast, encircling sea,
With its riplets roll'd
In Heaven's cloth of gold,
Or its great waves riding free,—
Their white crests lasht
By the stormy blast,—
Yet owning man's mastery,
As his brave bark sweeps
Through the surging deeps
To the haven where he would be!

Oh, to be out in the open!
Afar from the bigoted crew,
To walk in Heaven's light
And press on to the right,
Whose virtue makes all things new,—
Sweeping lies, in God's name,
To the pit of their shame,
By homage to that which is true!

But oh, to be in from the open!
  Where the limitless, unconfined
Immensities of time and space,
  O'erwhelm the human mind;
    As Heaven's host we scan,
    Lord, what is man?—
    The drudge of a day
    In his house of clay—
    A mite of earth's crust
    Who returns to his dust!

Oh! well to be in from the open
  Of the vastitudes profound,—
The terrors of eternities
  In which man's thoughts are drowned;
    With the Witness that tells
    That the pure heart dwells
In the House of the Lord even here,
With the Word Divine that is near,
    Giving power to descry
    The fair mansions on high,
    Where at home we shall be
    With God's whole family,
    To behold all His grace
    In the Son of Man's face.

J. P. Ritchie.

UNDER THE RED MAST-LIGHT.

The sun has set, the twilight glow has fled,
The stars begin to twinkle overhead,
The veil of darkness on the deep is spread.

Pacing the deck, into the night I pry,
The waves leap up and clap their hands on high,
I hear the night winds wail and sob and sigh.

What stills the heart amidst the waste, dark night?
The Captain's eye will read the course aright,
The compass gleams before the Steersman's sight.

Across the deep the destined haven lies,
Bathed in the light of sunny southern skies,
And soon will gladden our expectant eyes.

Deep unto Deep proclaims God's sovereignty,
He makes the darkness that is covering me,
And fearlessly I sail with Him the sea
That brings me to the Port where I would be.

J. P. Ritchie.

VIA CRUCIS, VIA LUCIS.

(FROM THE GERMAN OF KOSEGARTEN.)

Through gloom to light! And though grey darkness banish
Fair Nature from thy longing eyes,
All's well! all's well! The shadows soon shall vanish,
And bright and clear thy morn shall rise.

Through storm to calm! And if life's lightning flashing,
With thunder's roar, o'erpower thy will,
Faint heart, be brave! Above the billows' crashing
A voice divine cries "Peace, be still!"

Through frost to spring! Though winter's snowy fleeces
Hide every trace of Nature's store,
All's well! all's well! For when the hoar-frost ceases,
Earth fills her lap with flowers once more.

Through strife to peace! And if fell foes surround thee,
And succour thou implore in vain,
Faint heart, be brave! When vict'ry shall have crowned thee,
Triumph begins its endless reign.

Through toil to rest! And though the midday swelter,
And dull fatigue sap all thy strength,
Faint heart, endure! For eventide brings shelter,
And with it kindly sleep at length.

Through cross to crown! And though the world seem
stronger,
And daily weaker, fainter thou—
All's well! all's well! Endure a brief spell longer:
God's victory shall crown thy brow.

Through tears to joy! If morning find thee weeping
And sorrow fill the livelong night,
Faint heart, endure! Thy lot is in God's keeping,
And there e'en pain becomes delight.

Through death to life! Though earth be with its
sorrow
A mortal waste of sin and strife,
All's well! all's well! In Heaven's eternal morrow
Death shall be swallowed up in life.

F. C. Kolbe.

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